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OUTBOUND

By Gottfried Hult



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WILLIAM A. NITZE

With Best regards
Gustaf Hult,
pen D.

To Mrs. Wm. H. Witze.

A

Merry Christmas

&

Happy New Year.

1925.



OUTBOUND

BY
GOTTFRIED HULT

AUTHOR OF
REVERIES AND OTHER POEMS



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In Memory of My Mother

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Outbound

A FRAUGHT ship backs from her pier,
Midst a flutter of farewell hands:
And who can think her voyage begun
For transoceanic lands?

Thus Song unmoored from the heart:
And who divines of her goal,
As she swings into open seas of Time,
And far horizons of Soul?

OUTBOUND

Microcosm

WHERE flits the seedling soul, who knoweth,
Of worlds to be?
Still whitherso it listeth bloweth
The Spirit free.

A flake the winter welkin moulted
In passing o'er;
A film of moss where seas revolted
Against the shore;

A fern or fledgling in the forest,
Or mother bird:
Doubt not wherever need was sorest,
Each ministered.

In least as in the greatest, seething
What potencies!
Perished infinitudes bequeathing
Not more than these.

MICROCOSM

The earth-ship hath aboard her oceans
And sails the sky:
I, freighted with as deep emotions,
Sail heavens as high.

OUTBOUND

Starglade

SOFT astral shimmer on the spirit deep,
 Glinting my dreams a path wherein to sail,
Glinting my oaring thoughts the course they
 keep
 Along the silken trail.

O star, scarce visible in enmurking mist,
 From out what loam of dark, the single flower,
Distilling like a perfume on the whist
 Sea of a midnight hour!

Only a faintest echo of the sun,
 Or hint of full moon's flooding, yet through
 thee
How distant I from shores of self, upon
 The still and wistful sea!

CARYATIDS

Caryatids

PERPETUAL caryatids, these, of Song:
Beauty, that fashions from a little clay
The rose, and ushers dawn out of the gray
Before the Sun, swift for his course and strong;
And Love, heaven's compensation for the wrong
Of birth to one who, spirit, fain would stay
With Spirit, yet unsphered must tread the way
Of human years, meandering and long.

A caravan of ships on desert seas,
We sail the moonglade, Beauty; and afar
Uprisen, guides us Love, a changeless star.
Oh, when all lips are silent, chanting these,
Nor lingering echo of their praise shall be,
Time's outposts have o'erpassed eternity!

OUTBOUND

“A Lover of Beauty He”

“WHAT can we know of Him Who, knowing all,
Himself is known of none!” . . . I mused, and
back

From revery summoned thought, the rise and fall
Of ocean surf before me. There all black,
The perfect rondure of a far-off wave

Upclomb out of the clasp of tide at full,—
Hung poised, and shoreward thunderously drave:
And all the sea behind was carded wool.

Then culling from that fleece of foam a shell,—
So irised and so fashioned by the main,

It seemed like something wondrous that befell,
What time a heart of its own dream was fain,—
Quickly I spake: “Whatever else may be,

Yet know we this: a Lover of Beauty, He!”

DELVING

Delving

DELVING, delving, with sweat of brow!
Alas for isthmus delvers who bow
'Neath lives of drudging, nor glimpse in these
The interlinking of seas!

Delving, delving, with sweat of brain!
Alas for isthmus delvers who strain,
Of Goal unwitting in what is done:
Truth oceanic made One!

OUTBOUND.

"For a Little Season"

For a little season, upon a time,
There soared and sang a bird in the blue:
Autumn might come but now 'twas prime,
And prime must be caroled, was all it knew.

Swamp and meadow-land, mountain and moor,—
All the world but a vision for Song!
Molten snows but new livery sure
Of leaf and blossom—ere long! ere long! . . .

Idled a hunter by—espied
That Bliss aloft in its airy reels:
"Be loam for battening weeds to hide;
Be clay to bake into ruts for wheels!"

Spake,—and the arrow aimed let fly,
And loitered onward with careless tread:
Alone and silent, the endless Sky
Gazed adown on the Singer dead. . . .

“BEHOLD THIS DREAMER COMETH”

“Behold This Dreamer Cometh”

COMETH the Dreamer! Afar off, lo!
Treading pensive . . . 'tis he, we know.

Ay, with his multicolor coat on,—
One, forsooth, for our Father to dote on!

He dreameth dreams of obsequious sheaves,
Whose homage, upright his sheaf receives;

Rehearseth us, too, by day all complacent,
Of sun and moon and eleven stars obeisant.

Who saith to rend him not limb from limb?—
Into the pit with him! . . .

OUTBOUND

Summum Bonum

THERE stands a pine-tree amid northern winters,
Casting a shadow upon endless snow,
Long nights, or wrestling with the storm that
splinters,
And strews its tortuous path with overthrow.

Reared on a mountain side that climbs to bleak-
ness,
Branching, it fain would consummate a crown;
Yet, lest in moments it forget its weakness,
The avalanche around it thunders down.

Cloud caravans that come out of the spaces,
Burning with sunset desert-like at eve,
Over it linger as o'er an oasis,
And mists that pasture for a while and leave.

Thus day succeeding day, and season, season,
Beneath the gray, beneath the dark of sky,
Awed, it doth ask itself its being's reason—
Whence sprung out of the vasty All, and why.

SUMMUM BONUM

“Stood I but where, less mute, the heavens
 responded,
 Circled me beauty as the sea, an isle,
I might be yielding fruit as palm-tree fronded,
 Which watereth the intermittent Nile.

“Environed by a tenderness of bosom
 And eyes like that wherewith the Southland
 teems,
My life, even here, would have been song and
 blossom,
 Nor stood, the eremite of its own dreams.” . . .

Becoming thus articulate in its sighing,
 One night with the hush universe alone,
Faintly from out of depths like cadence dying,
 A Voice it seemed to hear—perchance, its own:

“Whatso the Power that wrought this forestation
 Of earth with soul,—by whatsoever plan,
Surely it wills that each one’s consummation
 Of selfhood be the uttermost he can;

“That whoso rise, their branches interlinking,
 Withstanding so as grove the whirlwind wroth,
Confederate be unto the end of sinking
 Roots deeper for a yet more stalwart growth;

OUTBOUND

“But he who stands withdrawn aloft and lonely,
What days 'twixt birth and death shall inter-
vene,
May consecrate himself unto this only :
To keep the nesting-place of Spirit green.”

SELFHOOD

Selfhood

I LAY and lent a darkling cricket ear :
One eeriest note out of its joys and griefs,
The while an ocean, muffled yet anear,
Thundered upon a thousand broken reefs.

OUTBOUND

Uncut Leaves

OFTEN in volume loaned me, as I turn
The pages, although glossed and underlined,
Leaves that by chance were left uncut, I find,
Leaves that, slit open, are like beds of fern—
Come upon in some forest's heart—trees spurn
The noon from by their branches intertwined;
Or like some mountain tarn, recessed behind
Crag, and reflecting stars that o'er it burn.
Delicate and elusive things, a nook
Of uncut leaves may hold: shy lyric dreams,
Meant not for gaze, hardly for glimpse of light;
Or sonnet, in that solitude of book,
All shimmery and soft with astral gleams—
Peered in upon by none save me and night.

DESERT AND RIVER

Desert and River

Unto its River spake the Desert: "Why
Idly glassing the heavens meander by?
Be outpoured here whereso is thirst, and grow
Thy mirrored heavens below."

Unto the Desert spake its River: "Be
Henceforth a Garden through this boon of me:
Myself an empty channel, do thou teem
With the surrendered Dream."

OUTBOUND

"I Dreamed That Dream Was Quenched"

I dreamed that Dream was quenched,
And my heart blenched
At how the world emptied itself of joy.
Of Spring, erewhile so fresh,—
Spring with the heart of trysting maid and boy,
The spirit flower seemed gone to seed in flesh.
Of Summer, with her sheen
At the meeting-place of heavenly and terrene,
Evanished, too, the soul! nor without it
Was morning any longer exquisite.
Forests, that are but seaweed of the sky,
A stranded ooze did seem of space gone dry.
There was no mystery in things, no spell
Of bird-song in the air, no nacre on the shell.
No lingering afterglows of twilight eves,
Nor autumn's red apocalyptic leaves,
Oped Ravery a visionary page.
Rose drearily the sun, as in a cage
Some tawny bulk, once leonine, upheaves
To be its living pendulum. The moon,
Appearing moth-white from its cloud-cocoon,

I DREAMED THAT DREAM WAS QUENCHED

Became the murky wraith of old eclipse.
No more the sea was Sea,
Fathomless, as to thought, eternity,
In wonted might uphurled,
But only the vast sepulchre of ships,
Whose ghosts, at ebbing tide,
Disbodied of incrustated wreckage, eyed
Afar the stark, cold, and dismembered world.

In that drear time,
Man knew no longer youth or prime;
The newly-born seemed old incredibly.
A delver within ruined hills for ore,
Ten thousand years and more,
Emerged into white noon, had been as he,—
So shriveled up with night, so cursed with grime.
More terror than befalls from Nature's hand,
At lancing of Volcano's pent-up ache,—
More desolation than of fire and quake
He wrought upon the land.
For in the age's wake,
Wonder and Song had ceased to be;
And battle-flags were rent for scullionry;
And Love was plucked as theme from the world's
tomes.
His pauseless toil I saw

OUTBOUND

Make brick with gathered straw:
Rose bastions, wherein Life immured itself;
Rose glutless vaults of pelf;
And everywhere were palaces and domes,—
But Joy was not, nor any hush for Awe.
Still thought made feint to explore
The universe for lore;
But moulted was the very sense of truth,—
Impossible save to miracle and youth!
Nor work was wrought but bore,
Evidence that the heart within was blind,—
That impotent is the dream-widowed mind.
Thus Man strained on and on
From futile deed to futile deed and—died:
And the air clarified
Of smoke from kilns and mills; and presently
Afar I seemed to see
Earth and the planets, hollow-eyed and haggard,
In horrible hellish dance, that never flagged,
About the bubbling caldron of the sun.

FALSE GODS

False Gods

THERE be who scorn the true god, Heart,
But kneel them down to Mind;
Take Learning by the hand and leave
Feeling her mate to find;
And there are feet so much in haste
Love pants and falls behind.

There be who make a whip of fact
For scourging Truth away;
Who buy and sell, making exchange
Of Soul for things of clay:
But hoarding is a thrift makes poor
Ever with such as they.

If drouth will age the lucid lake
Into a fen of slime;
If deserts burn where liquid seas
Ran blue in earth's dim prime—
God pity hearts whose love hath died
Beneath unpitying Time!

OUTBOUND

“Back to the Hills”

IN moments when I rent the robe I wore,
And, naked of illusion, shook with chills,
Suddenly have I heard it o'er and o'er:
Back to the hills, O soul, back to the hills!

The plain I trod being littered with dead hopes,
The valley, too, a cup the winter fills,
Then wafted me like warmth from pine-green
slopes:

Back to the hills, O soul, back to the hills!

Never so care-beset the heart in me,
Never so matted o'er and choked with ills,
But the same still small Voice came pleadingly:
Back to the hills, O soul, back to the hills!

Yea, when I doubted Man, not merely men,
Spat upon Fame, and wished me with the wills
And hopes and dreams of Time extinct—even
then:

Back to the hills, O soul, back to the hills!

“BACK TO THE HILLS”

Everywhere, everywhen, in teen and strain,

Iterant in my heart like singing rills!—

Death calling me, will it not come again:

Back to the hills, O soul, back to the hills? . . .

OUTBOUND

Genesis

My life seems but an inchoate mass of years,
Groping through an eternity of space,
Having its future orbit still to trace
Somewhere and somehow in the realm of spheres.
No beacon of its destined glory cheers,
Nor hints a first faint glimmering of grace
The slow transfiguration to take place
Ere Love, its new-created Lord, appears.
Give it to pass through any strain and stress
Of fire and earthquake needed to perfect;
Sculpture with flood, to winnowing storm sub-
ject;
Brood o'er the welter with Thy consciousness;
Give it Thine own perfection to reflect,
God, Thou world-builder and star-architect!

AT VESPER

At Vesper

I SAID: "Since out of travail come no yields
Commensurate with the ceaseless strain and
stress,

Why not forego the more, accept the less?

I will eschew being as one who wields

Power, and live emulous of him who shields

His sunward eyes from noonday light's excess—

Content myself with bovine placidness,

One of the human herd at graze in fields."

Then smote upon my ear this Voice: "O gross

Of spirit, whimpering thus for meed denied!

Knowest not perfect service, guerdon mars?

To unfulfilment Faith her being owes;

Anhungered, Aspiration doth abide:

Thereby is the longevity of stars.'" . . .

OUTBOUND

Endless Quest

SOMETHING I seek, never found—
A bourne of longing, a bound
Of hope; something beyond the gale
That says: "I am haven: furl sail!"
Something that whispers: "Peace!
I am surcease
Of the strife—
Life." . . .
In vain! in vain!
I cannot attain
Goal—quest, grope, strain, as I may
Always! . . .

I paused in a market thoroughfare,
With its traffic and trade ceasing ne'er—
Eyed wares in a booth:
Printed pages were there to sell, not Truth.
It flew over my head, a bird,
Limed never with speech, caged never in word.
I paused before fields: like a fleet
Of clouds in sunset, the wheat;

ENDLESS QUEST

And I looked for Pleasure, root-anchored too:
Past me on powdery wings it flew,
A butterfly soft,
Fluttering hither and yon and aloft.
By night I canoed a stream,
Sown with the constellations therein agleam;
And I looked for Love as the central star:
It was afar, afar,
In a spirit blue,
Not in the mirrored Milky Way splashed
 through. . . .
Quest, ever!
Attainment—never!

So I, drawing breath;
So too, haply, in death.

OUTBOUND

Resignation

CLOSE the door on the Hope that would win
Entrance from blackness and storm without;
Though the heart to the core grow dry within
As mummied pod after summer's drought.

Close the door, then hie thee to bed
To flood thee with sleep as a shore with tide;
Nor yield unto filmiest dream, lest the tread
Without through the long long night abide. . . .

DE PROFUNDIS

De Profundis

IMPOTENT as one sick upon his bed,
Between the intervals of fever throes,
Who hears a soft hand knock without, and knows
That he must leave the door unopenéd;
And trying to muster feeble breath instead,
Sinks back aswoon—ah me! even in such wise
All impotent at hearkened knock to arise,—
And have I swooned at Christ's retreating tread?
Whatso the hours or moments lush with sin
Bring forth of after-agony, with mute
White lips we needs must bow and kiss the rod;
But where we cannot do or fail to win,
Weighed down in weakness as a bough 'neath
fruit—
The rain of Thy sweet pity and grace, Lord God!

OUTBOUND

The Great Refusal

*“L’ombra di colui
Che fece per viltate il gran rifiuto.”*
Dante

I

IN VAIN, I tell thee, leech, thy cunning tries
To outwit Death. My moon has known its full,
Nor quails before eclipse. Thy charmed herbs
Are powerless to restore this waning life.
Nay, bid me not be silent: I who felt
This hand too weak to raise and intercept
A beetle, had it headed for my face;
Who swooned into such mimicry of death,
It even deceived thyself—I kenned the voice,
Was whispering of embalmment when I awoke—
Am strong to speak, must speak, ay, though I
knew
To hold my peace were to postpone the shroud!

II

Mute have I lain here, mute, these days and
nights,

THE GREAT REFUSAL

And would have gagged delirium itself
And throttled madness, lest they babbled forth
Thoughts I would mate with silence. My doomed
soul

Plunged on amid a sea that clave to it,
Clamorous for jetsam. Why then these my words,
This late surrender to demands of fate?
I know not by what mystic law the heart,
That yields to no brute enginery of force,
Yet opens at the summons of a waft
Of vernal air, the momentary gold
Of dawn, or twilight tinklings of the flock.
What dungeons catapults could not have budged,
Angels have whispered open. Hence I speak.
This morning through the casement stole a breeze,
The softness of whose touch gave evidence
That it had fanned the fig-tree, laved the vine.
Over my brow it shed a summer's fragrance:
I grew aware it was the Paschal Month,
And all my being began to undulate
Like wind-thrilled flame; from out this smolder-
ing life,
Thus breathed upon, jetted forth sudden fire,
That lit up all my past, my murky past.
The Chosen People entire I saw in dream,
How parceled out in caravans they converge

OUTBOUND

To brim Jerusalem, the Sacred City;
And, bedfast, I was journeying forth in thought
To wind among the hills and vales by day,
At night to camp beneath Judean stars,
To climb with song Mount Olivet, to descend
And stand within the presence of Jehovah. . . .
I burned at seeing upon the Temple still
The Roman eagle, oft fatally plucked down
By Jewish frenzy. Yet not haughty Rome's
Oppression, nor my own exclusion from
The Feast, did mingle bitterness with morn,
The bitterness ineffable I felt,
Till Hezekiah-like, but willing to die,
I turned my face toward the wall and wept. . . .

III

Have patience with my weakness. Grant me still
Some moments' truancy from drug and drowse,
And thou shalt glimpse the past I now behold,—
That red volcanic past. Its memories
Torment a dying bed, and yet it cleanses
To meditate a great soul's tragic end,—
His soul, which by its very end perdures.
How dowered with new interpretative sight
Become the breaking eyes! how consciousness,
Already irised for the bursting, holds

THE GREAT REFUSAL

Film-mirrored all the skies of bygone life,
And planet years, arisen like fixed stars!
O God, thou Abraham's God, how blind was I
To interlace my hands about the gold
Not meant for chaffer chink, but stuff for the
 ring,
Had married me unto eternal life!
For if life's more than power to heave one's
 breath,
Than something seed, nine moons enwombed,
 comes by,
Than even aught sucked in with mother's milk,
Or what, toil-worn, meat, drink, and sleep renew,
Then long ago I perished. Man, I tell thee,
Albeit not livid-lipped, a thing embalmed,
May yet be dead; still alien to the tomb,
So dead, Damascus steel could run him through,
And he would bleed not. Look upon me, look!
I was not still-born; sweet maternal lips
Anguished not white with such a mockery,
That birth-hour: swaddling clothes that wrapped
 me, wrapped
Infinite possibilities of passion,
And hopes as beautiful as ever promised
God usury on his loan of time and space.
It was not cerecloth that enwrapped my youth,

OUTBOUND

But broideries fine like favored Joseph's coat
Of many colors,—hiding, too, a breast
Not less athrob. With what a thrill my feet
First trod, unsandaled, sacred temple ground!
How gleams that flashed from Roman shields
and glaives

Smote to the quick! and great that moment's awe,
When poring over Sacred Roll I knew,
Solemn and sage as the Great Sanhedrin,
Eternal Duty, Righteousness, and Law! . . .
Such Vision makes one Hebrew. So time passed
Apace. I entered on incipient manhood,
A cypress like, not as it emblems death,
But greenly spires, slender and sensitive
To scurry of breezes. Thick as leaves my dreams
Hoarded the warmth of those midsummer years;
And felt first love's infinite moonrise, tranced,
Sylvanly tranced: then knelt the world before
me,

Like some meek camel pleading thus relief
From overburden of pearl and orient spice.
What wonder if its driver, that rich moment,
Recked not of leathern water-flasks, if filled,
Or dangling flabby from the dumb beast's flank!
Who'd task me such forgetting when the heavens
Were all mirage of oasis? . . . Such phase

THE GREAT REFUSAL

Of sense-life passed ere youth, already prone
To that world-seriousness wherewith our race
Is dowered uniquely. Yet I could not scorn
Beauty for holiness, in others' wise,
Nor range me wholly on the side of Truth,
There to do battle, wealth and power forsworn.
The riches that were mine by heritage,
I clung to but as means, fastidious
In choice of ends thereby to be attained.
Yet unrest waxed within me. Too clear-eyed
To dupe my soul with vanities and dross,—
Cold to the lure of tinselled make-believes,
I quailed at the fierce brevity of life,
Rust and the moth. The chambered past out-
grown
Of individual being, soon I knew,
Shuddering, a weird, wizard, other Past
Upon me lay its spell. Lone sites of ruin,
Long emptied of existence, the mind's ear
Peopled with ghostly steps; old rock-hewn tombs,
With tenantry from some forgotten eld,
And dateless, made me brood till bygone days
Became the sole reality. Emerged,
And back again, even in the city's flux,
I stood as in a trance, and the mind's eye
Sucked midnight out of noonday. By degrees

OUTBOUND

All zest for action staled. What bootéd deeds?
Present achievements were but ultimate
Futilities, and history the tale
Of fearful disillusion. Why should I
With toiling, ant-wise, vex myself for naught?
Thus, by its bath in endlessness, my soul,
Diseased with leprosy of too much self,
Strove to be purged, and only sickened more.
What wonder that my body sickened, too?
Illness doth often wring the human mind
Dry of illusions. The fierce fever-throe
May even be hot enough to shrivel self,
And wilt one's very religion into myth.
Unconscious though one lie, the chemistry
Of pain reacts upon one's consciousness
As on a parchment roll to be erased
For new and alien writ. 'Twas so with me.
Intensively I saw—up from the bed—
What I had only conned by rote before.
Back in the synagogue I felt myself
Mutinous 'gainst the elders who there sit
Lip-loyal to their Talmud lore. Meseemed
Feasts, pilgrimages, sacrifices, tithes,
Sabbaths and fasts, are dead observances
To be sloughed off, lest true religion perish.
Still blushed with bloody offering our altars,

THE GREAT REFUSAL

And sputtering flames attested the old faith
Did linger. Yet 'twas semblance, not the substance,—

An empty mockery of soulless form.
Better a Holy of Holies without fire,
Arkless, of sacred furniture bereft,
Than cherubim uninstinct with the Presence.

Ay, better Dagon, so the scaly god
Evoked from hearts the veritable Awe!
Thus Reason chafed within me 'gainst a faith
No longer Faith,—nor there alone in doubt
Questioned where once elate the heart believed.

I had put by tenderly as dead love
The apocalyptic ecstasy and dream,
The poetry of Israelitish hope.
Who quits a grave half filled, and turns him
homeward,

Beholds the world a strange new phantom world,
Through eyes still wet with utterless farewells.

“Must Judah perish, Judah, even Judah,
How blank the world's futurities of time!”

Thus cried my heart within—and then anon:
“If Rome be but Jehovah's winnowing flail,
And we His Chosen Seed—but no,—but no—!”
The lightning hissed its way through space, and
earth,

OUTBOUND

A moment preternaturally white,
Reeled back into engulfing black once more. . . .

IV

Pillow me up. I've strength. My tale half told
Gives me momentum for what's yet to tell.
—A leech, thou dost recall how once the land
Astonished at a prophet healer: he
Held in the toils of wonder his own province,
And captured all Judea's gaze at last.
Where'er he came there was disease abolished;
Who even brushed his mantle became whole,
However broken; his mere whispered name
Made sightless eyes to see, lame feet to run.
His ministry put forth its noiseless might
Among the obscure and lowly, yet his deeds
Outmiracled the dreams of prophecy.
Never such passion for another's weal
Enrobed itself in Rabbi's talith: mart,
Hill, plain, where'er his shadow a moment fell,
Knew an unwonted gentleness abroad.
The hedge and highway where Levitic feet
Disdained to tread, or trod to bruise and crush
The chance-sown blossom that co-dwelt with
weeds,
Familiar grew with his mild eyes and welcomed

THE GREAT REFUSAL

As friend his lofty unphylactered brow.
Unpopulous the hamlets drowsed, the day
He taught on shore or mount. The multitude
Listening till eve felt sunset premature.
Times were when they who found its noonday
 shade
Delectable, and whom the very wealth
Of intervening foliage made blind
To the sun-anointed brow, august o'erhead,
Murmured of crowning this already crowned
Lebanon cedar. Were Galilean hills
Speech-gifted, spake with tongue the Judean
 desert,
In whose mute presence oft his soul lay bare
To cooling and healing night, they would attest:
Not for a Purpose veering from its course,
Nor stayed—like birds of passage, light-be-
 wildered,
Or clamor-dazed—gave he the midnight hours
To rapt and lone devotion. There the stars
Beheld one purer than the Tiberian waves,
That crooned about the hills on which he prayed;
And if they twinkled through those long dim
 nights
On throneward gropings, 'twas a Throne not
 builded

OUTBOUND

With hands, nor upheld by legions. . . . One must
live
Not to doubt annals; yet experience
The ripest feels at moments: truce to dreams!
Reality's at war with human credence!
Leech, he who walked the courts of prayer at
night
To quench hosannas, died mock-crowned, mock-
mantled,
Mock-sceptered! . . .

V

Ay, the water-cruse! My lips
Grow parched with speaking. Thanks!—What's
human life
But quenchless thirst; and if one come who
brings
The cup we swoon for, drouth-delirious madmen,
We dash it down and curse the giver. Once
He came to me: I strewed the ground with shards.
—Beneath the acacia-tree, a stone's throw hence,
I lounged one day in dreams, his dreams who
sends
His soul abroad, searching dim time for light.
Too epic life fell cold upon my ear
Listening: it strained to catch from far-off deeds

THE GREAT REFUSAL

The seldom note of the lyric human. Chilled,
I wandered 'mid marmoreal coronals
Of past dead greatness, till a prayer for life,
Warm-pulsing life not tombed in sacred roll,
Escaped me. Scarce its voice was hushed when lo,
Emerging in the reach of mellow distance,
A nomad band! As one who sees afar
Sluggishness disengage itself from cloud
And grow into a sail, at gaze I stood,
Expectant, half aware some strange new hope
Was near its natal moment. . . . Sudden gusts
Made shimmer 'mid the olive-groves; date-palms
Loomed lone at intervals. What loitering folk
Kept nearing yonder? . . . Now a dip in the road
Filched them from sight.—Already I had learned
What wondrous things wrought one of Galilee,
As tidings told; the like sick Naaman thrilled,
Hearkening the little captive maid. Ere long
His faring might be hither. . . . Doubtless these
Were only paschal pilgrims, harbingered
By no chance fame. . . . Yet haply—! All at once
My heart waxed prescient of what Visitant
It tarried, and I straightway hied me forth,
Passionate as heat upquivering at noon
Sunward. Anon, our meeting,—they at halt
In wonder. Through his followers I plunged

OUTBOUND

Infallibly to his feet, and cried: "Good Master,
Declare me sooth, beseech thee, wherewithal
I may attain as thou the life eterne!" . . .
Somewhat delayed his answer, till I dared
Lift up my gaze. . . . I had not dreamed our race
Could flower into such manhood all divine. . . .
But language skills not! That's the potter's art,
To take a bit of docile clay and with
Creative touch make it a cup for kings.
Whose art shall body forth in clayey words
That visioned Cup, shaped for the King of
kings? . . .

For something even in that face of his
Bespake a greater greatness than himself,
A soul compassionate beyond compassion. . . .
"Good? wherefore call me good?" he breathed
at length

Reflectively. "Who is there such but God!"
A moment he let intervene, and then—
"Thou knowest the commandments of the law:
Do, and thou livest," came his quiet words.
Impulsively brake from my lips: "All this
I've kept inviolably even from youth."
Then what unfathomed tenderness of eyes,
The while he said: "One thing thou lackest: sell
All that thou hast and give the poor, and be

THE GREAT REFUSAL

My follower. There shall then be thine instead
Treasure in heaven." . . . I arose, stood facing
him.

Meseemed a curtain drew asunder: lo,
What scenery to baffle sight: sheer mount,
Precipice, snow; nor road to climb, nor—goal! . . .
A seascape, not the blue with mottling green
Of summer sea, but whelming shoreless white,
And one lone ship's distress! . . . Certes, 'twas
strange,

The wisdom he dispensed who yet was wise,—
The saying from his lips who yet must be
Interpreter to men of sovereign Word! . . .
To mint my all into a shining alms,
Wherewith to gorge the mendicant palm, myself
Thus beggaring,—what manner of mandate, this?
What manner of life? Treasure in heaven, and
yet

What life—here, now? . . . Swifter than I can
tell,

Alternatives rehearsed themselves in thought.
Intrinsically dross, 'twas wealth at least
Bulwarked me somewhat 'gainst the crude im-
pact

Of nothingness. Flocks, herds, and acres were
The surety for some privacy of dream,

OUTBOUND

And walled-in garden-plot of inward beauty. . . .
Thus I!—and him aface with, nerved with race-
nerves,

Along which flashed world-agonies; his mind
A race-mind, drinking like a firmament
The light of stars; a racial heart, his heart,
Tropic with all the ecstasies of man! . . .

How like a shallow pool of muddiest water,
The dwindling life of self beside such vast
Of oceanic living! Purblind I,

To stand not seeing in that hour of test
The contrast!—swiftly reasoning instead
After this wise: Who is it bids me thus
By surgery of utter sacrifice

Attain to life? Is't verily life he lives,
Self-generative, inwardly renewing
Itself perpetually in power? He hath
The spirit look, oblivious of things,
Of one who yoke-mates with Eternity,—

The beatific grace of brow, and yet
By very reason thereof, too aloof
And otherworldly for reality,
Perchance a dreamer, not the seer of vision.
Man should not be talaria-shod, and tread

THE GREAT REFUSAL

Tenuous ether like a star. Remove
From 'neath one the foundation props of
matter—

Crash!—ay, inevitably, soon or late! . . .

—Slaying the potency of high resolve

By indecision, not direct refusal,

I stood deliberate thus at forking ways.

Despite myself I turned and gazed about

Upon his followers. Neither staff nor scrip

Had they. Beyond a doubt, discipleship

Meant living hand to mouth, all forethought
waived—

Pruned sense for spirit flowering. . . . Suddenly

I caught as 'twere a leer upon the face

Of one wearing a purse, that from his belt

Dangled, responsive to a clutching hand

Pendulum-wise. . . . Almost I gasped for breath,

With dread stranglingly seized. My heart, till
then

Sensitive like a balance, hesitant

What dip to yield, precipitately plunged

By the increment of—was't the purse accurst,

Or snaky leer? . . . A speechless moment's pause,

And I was going from thence. . . .

OUTBOUND

VI

The water-cruse

Again! With yet a pillow prop me. So!

—Three decades' early and latter rains have
brought

Continuous increase to that fatal wealth

Whose plenitude hath only pauperized.

Yet not a lifetime's tutoring taught me this,

Nor Death's immutable "Overboard with it,"

Heard like a captain's orders in a storm,

Waxed to the uttermost. I knew before,

'Twas vanity—but what I came to know,

Listen! A scant twelve-moon elapsing since

The event I've told of, in Jerusalem

I sojourned, fain of throngs, because too much,

Solitude in its beauty among hills,

The muffled pastoral lowings from green fields,

Coerced me into thought. Could but the self

At will be 'scaped from, as one turns to the wall

The picture of a dead insistent face,

I had been happy. As it was, the days

And nights were gall and wormwood in my cup.

The self-same poison-bath of history,

The reek from spent religion's oilless wick,

The nation's frustrate Messianic hope! . . .

THE GREAT REFUSAL

Thus inward murk enhanced, which books perused

But deepened. Men, like vermin to me now,
Perforce I sought, as one in dungeon vault
Diverts himself with spiders weaving webs,
Or mice, stolen in, which thus keep madness out.
The causeway trod became my opiate,
The mart, my anodyne for pain. Abroad
I witnessed deeds of violence unmoved,
Such as inflicted on his countrymen
Made Moses slay the Egyptian. Populace
And foreign soldiery in bloody clash
Daily, nay, hourly, seemed to me as much
Mechanics as the promontoried shore
Charged by the legionry of lunar tides.
Fierce seethed the caldron of the nation's hate
With bubble and hiss, and desperately the ladle
Of Roman power kept skimming off revolt.
Yet martial law imposed upon the world,
Mankind explosively at boil beneath,
Seemed nature spectacle to me, a part
Of brute irrationality, writ large
In elemental hurly-burly, force
Wrestling with matter, while the universe
Looks on, indifferent as Caesar crowned
Which triumph, so but muscle remain taut.

OUTBOUND

—What wonder that in stolidness, one day,
I stumbled on what seemed a street-brawl, part
Of current turbulence supposedly!

Presently in the midst of weltering mob
I had submerged me utterly. A dog
Three-headed, gentile fables tell of, guards
The gates of hell. A myriad-headed wolf,
Tongues lolling and teeth gnashing, thus kept
watch

Where Pilate's mansion with its grim facade
O'ertowers the central thoroughfare. The glut
Suddenly merged into one wolfish throat
With "Crucify him!" its reiterate cry
Of frenzy. . . . Leech, hast swum where tidal
seas

Make suction among scooped out reefs till brine
Is leonine in massed ferocity?

Such did I feel that human undertow
Wherein I swam, thus gaining luckily
The wall-projection clutched and clung to. Mean-
time

The palace door had oped, through which emerged
The governor into view, and—soldier-led,
Who if not he . . . the Galilean prophet!
That instant made me human. . . . Though afar,
His face I saw above the folded arms. . . .

THE GREAT REFUSAL

What peace!—like western heavens in after-glow! . . .

Conspicuous stood Pilate in command.

The mob perplexed and angered him as told

His gestures, menacing, expostulating,

To get the hearing vainly sought withal.

Their “Crucify him! Crucify him!” louder

But waxed each moment. Presently a guard,

Signed to, was fetching in an ewer and basin,

And lo, Pontius Pilate, governor,

Washing his hands! That symbol-speech spake
home.

Such frenzied glee! Yet all the while afar,

He of the folded arms 'twixt soldiers twain

Perturbless in his peace! . . . I followed him

A few hours later on his deathward climb

Up the hill, Calvary, and there saw nailed

His quivering form to a rood, and raised aloft.

I caught from him a recognizing glance

Sent down ere the last swoon; nor me alone,

His eyes remembered: him who sundered us,

Him of the purse accurst and snaky leer,

Him, his betrayer, as 'twas whispered me,

They turned their full compassionate gaze upon,

The while he paused in the way beneath his cross.

OUTBOUND

That lingering gaze turned backward to forgive
Published the universe—God! . . .

VII

Ay, fan my brow!

—It is a time makes kingdoms warp and crack,
The epoch ages visibly for death,
Despair hangs vastly brooding o'er the world.
There's not a tree about Jerusalem,
But, straining to the requisite height, may serve
As instrument retributive for us
Who slew the Anointed One. I see, I see,
Judgment impends—and penalty which time,
Elapsing, makes but terrible the more!
Yet outward desolations, what are they—
The scoriac downpour, earthquake shock, and fire,
Without, compared with desert drouth within,
From whence in the end more surely a Dead Sea!
Strange, strange inscrutably, that in our hands
Choice and rejection thus should lie, whereby,
Saved or undone, we owe it to ourselves! . . .
The years flow on, his memory remains,
As o'er the blue-grey Jordan ever flowing,
A white cloud anchored lies immovably
Reflected, through a breathless summer's day.

THE GREAT REFUSAL

Wherever I have dwelt and sojourned, he,
Too, dwelt and sojourned, I beneath his eyes
Escapeless! In long watches of the night,
He came instead of sleep; by day, at tasks,
A moment's pause for rest, and lo,—his face!
Hence, too, the ache and pathos of my days,
To live my Great Refusal o'er and o'er
In thought and dream,—again, and yet again,
Him to reject whom fain I would accept.
Thus in one deed's remembrance is the stuff
For countless dooms. The beaker spilled became
A brook, a river, seas! . . . Strengthened and
cleansed

Of vision by austerities lived through,
I turn my gaze from watery chaos plunged
Abyssward, to the sheeted mist whereon
Perpetual rainbow. What if it should prove,
Defeat to him was Victory indeed!
Searching, searching, as one with hand agrope
In darkness, till he ope a door and stand
Beneath the sky, I ask and win response.
Verily, depth discovers itself height,
The more I gaze! Hence his prophetic eyes
Recognized in the people's enmities
Unripened worships; hence even from the cross
Saw garnered from his three-years' ministry

OUTBOUND

Millennial corn; therefore he cried aloud,
“It is finished!” . . . and so yielded up his breath.
The Love which so could fellowship with men,
Which so could die—slowly my consciousness
Hath heaved itself through dark tempestuous
doubt
Toward the conviction: it is He, the Christ! . . .

VIII

My speaking emptied me of strength, and yet
In spirit I'm the stronger that I spake,—
Stronger and more at peace, as if my heart
Had been assoiled of blemishment somehow.
There's devious traveling betwixt birth and
death,
And little knows the traveler whom he meets
And lets go by ungreeted. Presently
I knew! . . . Draw me the curtain to. I'd sleep.

JUDGMENT

Judgment

TODAY, one fateful moment, Soul
Made craven compromise with Sense :
I shudder, journeying toward the goal
Of Crisis, days or ages hence.

OUTBOUND

Good Friday

THE spirit's natural aliment and cup
Upon a day like this is solitude:
Withdrawn afar the heart partakes of food,
And entered into quietness doth sup.
Spent winds, and dews distilling drop by drop,
And shades in wake of lapséd sun and moon,
The mind to that world-agony attune,
And cry wherewith His breath He rendered up.
Thus ponder I that Tragedy Divine,
That scenery abyssed in gloom and dole—
Gone forth beneath the awesome stars abroad;
Thus ask I, being of thy ninety and nine:
Great Universe, who shepherd art of Soul,
What didst thou with the One—the Lamb of
God? . . .

SABBATH

Sabbath

I KNOW it by the twilight hush,
The trance that follows evening's flush;
By hill and dell that leaf-bestrewn
Slumber beneath the autumn moon.
From breathless heavens, the cloud-filmed night
Silvers it forth in pensive light;
And every star the message brings:
There's Sabbath at the heart of things.

I know it by the storms that die
In the large quietude of sky;
By stillness of oncoming dawn;
By silences of years withdrawn.
Yea, if I read the blue aright,
The meaning of its starry night,
And catch the song Creation sings,
There's Sabbath at the heart of things!

OUTBOUND

Vita Brevis

IF OUR scrimp life, methought, might lengthen
out

To parallel Methuselah's in years,
Or even were such in age as made us peers
Of patriarchs, unhaste were well, no doubt. . . .
Fool! seeing we pass our predetermined route
In fourscore revolutions of the spheres
At utmost, all the more forswear with fears
Precocious deed, struggle, and strain, and shout.
The soul herein should tutored be by field
And prairie: these in flush of ardent May
Conserve the Sabbath mood in joy's despite;
And, knowing how brief the months ere they
must yield,
Sink into vast serenity by day,
And quietude of pulseless dream by night. . . .

AT SCHOOL

At School

I

A TEACHER once had pupil followers,
A motley number. His most gifted ones
He placed within a garden rich with flowers,
To cultivate and keep it, bidding them
Not fail to bring the fairest blooms to Him.
Hemmed in with bee-loud hedges they abode
Awhile in gladness, and such perfumes breathed
As match in lure the music of blent lyres,
And, passing, leave behind a wake of dreams.
But feasting thus their sense in the delight
Of blowing wonders, whereon humming birds,
Darting, became a trance of wings, and moths
Made sojourn at first twilight, they forgot
The Master,—sheer forgot; and, staled in soul,
Warped cunning to extract flower essences,
Distilling, flasking attar for its own sake.

II

To others of the pupil throng He oped
His library, a central garner fed

OUTBOUND

By conflux from all granaries of mind,—
A land that flowed with milk and honey of books;
Bade ponder wisdom there that so in the end
At His feet, as an offering, they might lay
The fruits of ripe reflection. Thus a space
Mindful of such high ultimate purpose fixed,
They searched the teeming tomes, with mind and
heart

One throbbing mutual ardor; but in time,
Their entrance vows forgot, they waned in zest,
With lore too sated; and at length became
Like holiday children, who, all tired of sea,
Upon a beach the patient ages wrought
With coral, pry out fossil curios,—
Shells, irised by the tide, to prink themselves
For mirrors: thus fastidiously they culled
From curious bric-a-brac washed up by books,
Nor knew that so were bartered realms for beads,
And dawdled hours away to no avail.

III

Still others the good Master singled out
For the office of dispensing in His house
Its generous hospitalities; to receive
And feast His guests, and—specially enjoined
By mandate—to bring all at last to Him.
Made temporary lords and mistresses

AT SCHOOL

Of frescoed halls, hung round with chandeliers,
That radiantly lamped the festal glee,
They, too,—and sooner than all else—forgot
Their charge, and waxing flabby in soul thought
only

To supplement already costliest wines
With rare inmelted pearls; to smother brows
Beneath more opiate garlands,—day and night,
Lolling at feasts, with gossip, posture, smirk,
And all the shrunk inanities of Mode.

IV

What pupils yet remained, a company
Most numerous, this Master with designs
Ungessed, assigned to every service drear
And toilsome: these, doorkeepers to admit
Others to festive halls, themselves compelled
To endure without the sleety tempest; those,
Like sumpter-beasts, bred for such end, to bear
Burdens the long day through. And lo! the
thralls,

Though not suspecting salt earth-drunken tears
And sweat preserve the land, else putrid, sweet
And wholesome, yet swerved not from loyalty
To the seeming Author of their fate: nay more,
Urged thereto by their tasks' repulsiveness,

OUTBOUND

But thought with greater longing, passionate love,
Of Him they served ; nor grudged to build their
throes

Into protecting walls for the favored few
In garden, or who meditated books
To fruitful ends for the Master,—even for them,
The revelling overseers of His house.

V

If the Master, some eventual Day, had scanned
Records . . . each several one and class by class,
Or ere Vacation,—the long school-year o'er,
Verily, how had first been last ! last, first !

ELECTRIC PEAK

Electric Peak

THERE towers aloft a mountain height somewhere,
So pregnant with rich ore within, they say,
No trustiest instrument can make survey
Of bosky lands, its mighty slopes upbear.
Betimes above its brow in summer air
There's revelry of lightning. Such to-day,
Existence: much of thunder-storm display,
But of what use is the soul's transit there?

Only withdrawn from the Electric Peak,
The vibrant intuitions become true;
Only when for this hot desire to do,
To be is made the goal toward which we seek,
The thing we would we know; the word we speak
Which is ourselves; nor frustrate need we strew
One seed not yielding its fulfilment due,
If still earth's heritage is of the meek.

OUTBOUND

Love's Epiphany

AS WHEN the moody Western Sky hath flung
A withered sunset rose-like from her hand,
Bleak, mist-enwrapped, lie mountain, vale, and
 strand,
With stilly brooding twilight overhung;
Till suddenly from clouds, wind-rifted, sprung,
The moon as if with touch of magic wand
Thrills into silvery whiteness sea and land,
And snowy glides the new-blown stars among—
So, after flaming youth had passed, I knew
The wistfulness of pensive twilight hour,
When lo! a moon-pure Spirit rose to view,
And touched me with its all-creative power:
And 'neath its flooding radiance I grew
Whiter than earth or sea—by night, in flower.

SONG

Song

PEOPLE my sleep to-night
With dreams of thee!
Lonely hath been the day,
Deprived thy sight;
Lonely the night will be,
Thou still away!

Forlorn in the noon throng,—
Thou wast not there!
In solitude forlorn,
At even-song!
Oh, to behold thee ere
Again the morn!

Again the morn, and thou
Being not its light,
More dark the dawn will be
Than darkness now!
People my sleep to-night
With dreams of thee!

OUTBOUND

Interim

Oft waiting to put by my sumpter's load,
But Sleep, the sweet deliverer, hours away,
Spent have I sat, 'mid shadowy thoughts that lay
Like evening on hushed waters. Overflowed
With moonlight soon the shores of revery glowed,
Where seeking covert I was fain to stay,—
Escaped, a thrall, unmanumitting Day,
Escaped, a drudge, Hours of the yoke and goad.
Anear the plashy marge, that interim,
Dream deepened into trance; to sit and hark
Was peace that even slumber knows not of:
The while ebb'd sea again became abrim,
Erasing stars from canvas of the dark,
I limned the wondrous face of her I love.

TRYST

Tryst

As when a yester June comes back in dream
To one in bleak midwinter, and reclad
With all the vernal loveliness they had,
Forest and plain no longer naked seem
Beneath the snows that swirl, the rains that
 stream ;
Earth and the sky throbbing as in the mad
Ardor of vanished prime again are glad ;
And glad is he for whom with life they teem ;—
As one thus dreaming in a season drear
Rehearses Summer, until inwardly
Thrilled with her very presence as with wine,—
Thrilled with her, palpable to eye and ear,
And yet all spirit—such, to-night, with thee
Hath been my tryst of dream, woman divine !

OUTBOUND

“As Weds the Skimming Dove”

As WEDS the skimming dove
Some little wave of blue,
My wingéd heart would wed thee, Love,
And be ensilvered too.

As dawn empearls the wing
Of lark that sings its bliss,
My heart, that soars with caroling,
Would twinkle with thy kiss.

As sunset all the West
O'erflows in its decline,
O Love, this heart would be at rest,
And blend its life with thine!

ASPIRATION

Aspiration

A LITTLE drop of water lay
And yearned for purity one day.

But one desire its longing knew:
To be transfigured into dew;

To leave the gutter and the mart,
And twinkle in a blossom's heart. . . .

Ere long the wind came dancing up,
And bore aloft the dreaming drop;

And out of vernal sky of blue
The sunbeams lent it pinions, too.

At last as dew it found repose
Within the bosom of a rose. . . .

The soul would be immaculate:
Creator, what will be its fate?

OUTBOUND

Plighted

AND knowest thou why I have refrained
So long from suing for thy lips?
Why wan and cold I have remained
'Neath self-imposed eclipse?

It was not fear to breathe the word,
Might bring the skyey glory—thee;
Nor happiness a while deferred,
That bliss the more might be;

But I was thrilled with the intent
To be as realms of azure are,
Before I asked the firmament
To spare its loveliest star.

I purposed from the surge and swell
Perfection's iris first to win:
And I—uniridescent shell,
Enclose the pearl within! . . .

Yet felt I not that being shod
With fiery longings for the Goal

PLIGHTED

Must mean ascent from depths of clod
To pinnacles of soul;

And did not ages past affirm
That upward trend all living things;
Were very writhings of the worm
Not prayer to God for wings—

This moment even I had not durst,
Though drunken with thy beauty's wine,
Thrust years or æons by and burst
To merge thy life with mine.

OUTBOUND

“As Grows An Isle”

AS GROWS an isle with corals numberless
Until it clasps the quiet pure lagoon,
Whose utter depths, too deep to sound, lie strewn
With ocean's wealth of irised loveliness;
And hastes in tropic flowers and vine to dress
Its naked clay; and waves with forest soon
Of palmy screen against the burning noon:
A paradise of bliss and beauteousness—
So round thy fair pellucid life I grow,
With all its wealth of thought and dream beneath.
Within me there's a quickening and glow;
And some day I shall clasp thee with a wreath
Of consummated manhood—unwithstood,
Since worthy thy consummate womanhood.

HOLY MATRIMONY

Holy Matrimony

It is not being wed,
Albeit pact be sealed by priest
Before glad kin who come with gifts
From near and far and sit at feast.

Who pass from altars forth
As twain abide till soon or late,
When lanced with grief or stung with shame,
Their hearts grow one, co-sharing fate;

And other twain at length,
Whatever payment made, Time's toll,
Awake, knowing their marriage morn,
Because they love as Soul and Soul.

OUTBOUND

The Brook

(To F. G. H.)

A BROOK I know whereof I dream
A princess wild is she,
To wax into a queenly stream,
And wed the royal sea.

She dances from her mountain home
Into the morning sun;
Dallies with rainbows—dashes foam
Upon their hopes anon.

Where barrier her laughter stems,
Tree-bole or rocky cleft,
From her pure breast she plucks the gems,
And strews them right and left.

The grass flings down an emerald cloak
Before her dainty tread;
A fern would willingly be oak
To canopy her head.

THE BROOK

She gives her ringlets many a toss,
She knows the realm's her own,
Yet shares her princessdom with moss,
And diadems a stone.

Singing, singing, the livelong day,
Pelting a vale with glee!
Her whereabouts?—Ah, I'll not say,
Nor who this Brook can be!

OUTBOUND

My Daughter

THERE was such glee in that frail envelope
Of body which is she, that I scarce knew
From moment to laughing moment what was
due

Of fate that might befall her. Such a scope
Of ecstasy, such zest in things, and hope!
Such footing brinks in every breath she drew,
And sheer escapes! Fresh as in heights of blue
Wildgoat among the crags or antelope,
Her spirit! . . . Years have sped, yet unsubdued,
Splendidly madcap, live to finger-tips,
Woman as girl! Not now rash clambering up
Of steep, or plunging headlong into flood,
And yet—adventure: holding to her lips
Immediacy like a brimming cup.

TO FATHER AT EIGHTY

To Father at Eighty

ONCE, leaving to sail
Far over sea abroad,
I lingered on a knoll and let
A last returning glance
Give me back home and kin,
Give me back thee, standing there in the sun-
set . . .
Ere the dip of highway, flood,
And unknown lands.

Now, voyage ahead,
'Tis thou lingering dost stand,
Letting the backward glance
Gather up kindred, home,
Wafted farewells, thy eighty years of life . . .
At gaze alone,
In beautiful quiet sundown,
Boun for the great Sea!

OUTBOUND

Ad Matrem

IN A dream last night I stood—
Mother mine! Mother mine!—
Thy lone grave without, a key
In my hand, wherewith I would
Unlock the turf that led to thee—
Mother mine! . . .

But no doorway found I there,—
Mother mine! Mother mine!—
Threshold none, though once 'twas trod,
Neither entrance anywhere,
Save bolted by three-decade sod—
Mother mine! . . .

Then I vowed myself awake,—
Mother mine! Mother mine!—
Only to renew my vow:
I will yet behold thee,—slake
My thirst for thee in Vision, thou
Mother mine! . . .

CONDOLENCE

Condolence

COMMUNION with thy Loved One gone before,
In revery by day, in dream by night,
Sustain thee, lest thou faint or perish quite.
The isle that hath been visited too sore
With earthquake, healing Time cannot restore:
Yet seek what shelter may be. Touch and sight
Failing us, would with subtler sense we might
Foresee the Dawn of soul with soul once more!
All lorn shalt thou not dwell, so visioned: he,
Who, Sidney-like, was gentle, brings a cup
To quicken thee athirst; and in thy stead
Will bear the widowed burden tenderly;
Will enter in at dusk and with thee sup:
We live environed by our noble dead.

OUTBOUND

Acknowledgment

You among hills whereunto the sea's marge is,
I at the heart of inland snowy plain:
Ah, how more myriad than the snow Love's
largess!
Splendider than your main!

CALAMUS

Calamus

WHEN Phidias his Zeus had wrought complete
To front the Greek Olympiads with law,
In godhead such as the blind singer saw
Give pledge to Thetis of the silver feet,
A name he chiseled where no eye would meet,
Somewhere upon a finger of the god,—
Of locks ambrosial and the thunderous Nod
Thus meekly making dedication sweet.
If songs—even these wherein so much amiss,
Something of old achievement had to boast,
Soaring where step by step they now ascend,
What gain withal other than art's in this?
For still but utterleast were uttermost
That friend would fain make dedicate to Friend.

OUTBOUND

To A. W. G.

What inspiration flowered at prime
In melody, I owe it her:
She searched the calyx of each rhyme,
And sipped—if any sweets there were.

Though now in sundered spheres we ply
The tasks that unto each belong,
She's still the ruby-throat . . . whom I
Saw poised above my firstling song.

EXODUS

Exodus

My mind this morn was a hive in spring,
Yet, in spite of my utmost heed,
The gypsy swarm stole away on the wing,
With a queen-bee thought in the lead;

Buzzed away in the morning beams
To wassails of fresh honey brew:
Ah, me, how hard to domesticate dreams!
How madder than mad to pursue!

OUTBOUND

Coincidence

ON RIVER marge I strolled.

Midstream in patient rings a hawk patrolled,
Then—bolt-like fell:

Gleamed 'neath it, rising, the clutched pickerel.

That instant, too, mid-thought

Plunged and emerged again with prey long
sought

A taloned bird:

My sonnet, holding in fierce clutch—a word.

RECOGNITION

Recognition

“MY SONGS are sung,” I said.
“Songless because unwed
To Beauty, I must linger out my days.
The Vision me hath jilted ;
With spirit parched and wilted,
Already I am autumn browns and grays.
Suffice youth’s preludings :
Henceforward—silent strings !
And better so, ay, haply better so !
One pang the less thereby shall manhood know.
For who saw yet out of his soul’s emprise
Plenal fulfilment rise ?
When greatly the heart purposeth,
Lo—death !” . . .

So I, touching my lot,
And from four walls betook myself abroad. . . .
“Dear God !
And is it June ? I had forgot—forgot !
Lush leafage, glint of wings ;
Nesting aloft in branch, and throat that sings ;

OUTBOUND

The same passionate robin ecstasy
From tripped-o'er lawn, out of the crown of tree,
As in the yester springs
Linked bliss to bliss, and mated my child's glee.
Why the World's beautiful: her brow was old
And wrinkled, only mirrored in a book.
Seen face to face, behold
How virginal and fresh
And sweet of flesh,—
Perennially young, and singing like a brook!"

Thus strolled I, spirit-cheered,
A way oft frequented because apart
From the many's tread, and noises
Of raucous-throated mart,
Yet double-fringed with dwellings, Thrift had
reared.

And little children's voices
Made laughter in my heart, —
Involuntary laughter, like the jet
Of rainbow out of murky mist and wet.
Each tendril of upcurling smoke,
Which the hearth within bespoke,
Each dooryard which a lilac bush made green,
Each window curtained clean,
Flung me an alms of gladness as I passed

RECOGNITION

With eyes that craved their dole.

“If,” said I, in that moment’s cheer of soul,
“With the simple come and go of days content,
I so could live, letting their good and ill
Alternate as they will;
Not poisoning sunshine, asking if ’twill last;
To blinding sleet and rain indifferent,
So but some hours be bright,
Mine would be peace at least if not delight.
Put to no desperate shifts
To compass aims beyond the scope of gifts,
Yet out of such so lowly life might I
Climb a little nearer, haply, to the sky,—
By a trail of human interests led up,
Windingly higher and higher, the mountain top.
Ay, even for very lack of stature, be
Called to up sycamore tree
By One that in my house this night would
sup!” . . .

Thus quickened, passed I far
Out into a wide amplitude of plain,—
Of the healing sunset fain,
Of vesper quiet, new moon, and first star.
And her I love saw I with inner eye—
Lovelier than the sky;

OUTBOUND

And spake faltering: "Truly it is thou,
Known by the token of thy touch,
By the whiteness of thy brow:
Sundown was oft our tryst,—still be it such.
I came, 'tis true, from other fount to drink,
But here upon the brink
Of thee let my soul's cup be filled instead
With living water—thee: I am athirst;
I am anhungered for thee as for bread.
Brood o'er me as the spirit dove o'er chaos:
Thou knowest what inner terrors oft affray us
Who are devotees of the fierce godhead, Song,
By pact which we could break not, if we durst.
'Twas therefore that erstwhile in bitter doubt
I did thee wrong,
Thinking that me, thine own, could Beauty flout,
That me, thine own still, henceforth she hath left
To pine away in darkness, song-bereft:
And yet beside me now
Art thou not here, is she not here, being
thou?" . . .

Back from my stroll, within four walls I sat.
The wick becoming weaned of oil,
I shook the lamp to illume again my toil.
Anon the hearkened clock with twelvefold stroke

RECOGNITION

Made yesterday of the erewhile study hours,
Made yesterday of the lamp's ebbing out,
Yet grieved I not thereat.
Despite the darkness, was not June without?
And the little cot-hemmed street, with sleeping
 folk,
Replenishing its powers
For tomorrow's unhived goings to and fro?
And out in the far plain . . . nay, nay, not so,
But Presence here and Spouse, by night, by day,
Beauty, with me alway!

OUTBOUND

Founders' Day

FASTIDIOUS what dead her Minster floor
Shall cover, England's ancient Abbey stands,
A sweet memorial from days of yore,
Sought out by feet of pilgrims from all lands.
Whoever heeds her vesper chimes and steals
Into the hallowed precinct, though his heart
An alien be to prayer
And praise, a subtle sense of worship feels;
And lingers, dreamy-eyed, where sculptor's art
Records what master minds have anchored there.

Must that sweet spirit be to us unknown,
Or must we seek it wandering oversea,
In storied haunts with ivy overgrown,
Or where long ages past have strewn debris?
Is there no such ambrosia for the soul,
Unless within dim choir and transept aisle
A thousand years and more
Echo the anthems that the living roll?
No spell of dream, unless in cloistered pile
We meditate the fames whose reign is o'er? . . .

FOUNDERS' DAY

There once befell a strife among the Twelve
O'er who was first in heavenly rank and power;
And He Who deepest in the soul could delve,
Who glimpsed in mustard-seed and wilding
flower

A parable of truth else undivined,
Into their midst called forth a little child,
And spake: "Lo, chiefest, he,
In whom its lowliness of heart and mind!"—
By outward semblances of things beguiled,
Our eyes are holden that we may not see.

Our yesterdays may be too brief a space
For ripening such charms as heart would feel;
For giving sweet romance its subtlest grace
And potency of exquisite appeal;
Yet who survey these human acres, ploughed
And seeded with ancestral pain, nor draw
Some lesson from the sight,—
Some new reminder whereby to be vowed
To worthier ends beneath a higher Law,
Do not commemorate the past aright.

We meet to-day that from what was, what is
And will be take increase of nobleness;
But for such festal moments we should miss

OUTBOUND

Something of prescience : in the strain and stress,
'Mid all the seeming nothings of our days,
Who would not sink unnerved and all but spent,
Must tutor himself brave,
Pondering by what strange and devious ways
The yester years pressed on and made ascent,
With deeds not all convergent to the grave.

When still the New-World continent, rich-soiled
And teeming, lay like jungle in a trance;
When arrow-fanged, its every thicket coiled
And hissed with interdict against advance
Of the explorer or stern pioneer,
Did they who thrid the trail or built the hut
Surmise the future State?
In the more lofty structures that we rear,
Wherever toiling onward, are we not
As ignorant of the purposes of fate?

Nor less the heroic discipline whereby
Our wills are being schooled: the strain and
 strife
Of adolescent cities, whence the cry
Continuous of congested human life;
The duel to the death 'twixt poor and rich;
The raucous chorus of an age of steam;
The industrial thirst for gold—

FOUNDERS' DAY

Are these not savagery indeed, to which
Primeval pioneering tame doth seem,
In sylvan wildernesses, trod of old?

Nor boots it that our minds we saturate
And flood with lore, undreamed of anciently,
If so Truth perish that our sires made great;
To us, the lords of matter, if it be
An outworn or too nebulous a creed
That things have worth as handmaids of the soul,
Or else are wholly vain,
What profiteth our lordship us indeed?
What deeper insight, ours, to hint the Goal,
Whereto, sore tried, the spirit would attain?

It gropes to-day as it groped yesterday,
Our darkling Whence no better understood,
Our darkling Whither without beacon ray
To guide toward highest end and ultimate good.
In this atomic grist now being ground,
Our husks of theory and unwinnowed fact,
Is there potential Bread? . . .
Perchance!—Yet where already truth seems
 found,
How much the sober morrow must retract!
And wherewith now is spirit to be fed?

OUTBOUND

—Like pleadings of soft intermittent bells,
In Sabbath stillness to come forth and be
Of them that worship, unto one who dwells
Withdrawn into the self, where wistfully
He broods in silence—such mild summonings
Urge back the song into a gladder strain
Of hope and festive cheer;
To-day of all days, whosoever sings,
Let him sing thankfulness that once again
To honor Alma Mater we are here.

If darkness fall, the more resplendent, She!
If Mammon rise, her lips must teach the more
That not in things possessed is majesty;
If knowledge fail us, let her going before
Track out new paths of truth, our feet may tread;
If doubt confuse, the accents of her voice
Still shepherd us aright;
If strenuous for high ends, though ill bested,
Let there be recompense in knowing our choice
Was such as to be pleasing in her sight.

Her elder children born, the vanguard throng
Of thronging generations yet to come,
We sing a crescent glory: they in song
Will hail it at the full when we are dumb.

FOUNDERS' DAY

From loftier heights of blue, less cloud-obscured,
The richer splendor of that beauty's dower
Their gladder eyes will greet;
And yet the light that through these years endured,
We feel in this commemorative hour
Hath been even as a lamp unto our feet.

Ensanguined lest young Freedom's light should
wane,
Old battle-fields are sacred; every shrine
That treasures their memorials of pain
Is therefore doubly hallowed and divine.
If there are shoes 'tis fitting we unbind,
Be it no less where man his bread has cast
On waters of no fame;
Or wheresoever mind, enkindling mind,
Into the Future from its flickering Past
Sped forth a new relay of missive flame.

Not overawed by fluctuating Time,
The dauntless Spirit somehow triumphs on,
Building new pinnacles and more sublime,
For crumbled shrines from centuries ago.
For every generation blotted out,
With what wild fervor of impetuous breath

OUTBOUND

Another doth appear!
That mightily each advent means, who'll doubt?
Nor but to cater revelry for Death,
The nine-moon clusters ripen, year by year.

Such paeans from ambiguous oracles
May still be wrung as in the olden days:
Be ours the old-time spirit that compels
Destiny; and be this alone our praise
And guerdon, to have faltered not nor swerved
In crises of the tragic racial strife
And struggle to ascend!
Be what they may, the aims by Time subserved,
So the Eumenides of human life
But choral benediction o'er its end!

“MOTHERING”

“Mothering”

“Amongst these (old customs) was a practice of going to see parents, and especially the female one, on the mid Sunday of Lent, taking for them some little present, such as a cake or a trinket. A youth engaged in this amiable act of duty was said to go ‘a-mothering,’ and hence the day itself came to be called ‘Mothering Sunday.’”

Chambers’ Book of Days.

BY THE Sabbath of spirit enfolden,
Which quiet and revery bring;
In the light of years backward beholden,—
Winged decades, too swift on the wing;
Reviving the wont of days olden,
Our hearts go a-mothering.

What may we give her, the Mother,
Whose travail of soul gave us birth;
Through whom we are sister and brother,
Too one for the sundering earth—
Trinket or cake or some other
Gift of as trivial worth?

OUTBOUND

Ah, but we need not to bring her
Aught but ourselves in this hour!
The Vision asks naught of the singer
Save alone that he flood with its power;
Nor Moon, of the shadows that linger,
Save that they drink of her shower.

Ever in beauty all fadeless,
She welcomes us back to her sight:
Time, making leafless and bladeless
The forest and meadow by flight,
Her hath bedimmed not nor made less—
Her like a star in the height!

By the Sabbath of spirit enfolden,
Which quiet and revery bring;
In the light of years backward beholden,—
Winged decades, too swift on the wing;
Reviving the love of days olden,
Our hearts go a-mothering.

VALEDICTORY

Valedictory

WE HAVE been captained well!—So in this hour,
Severing sailors' bonds, we needs must feel;
He now to navigate with other keel,
Our Captain! . . . We shall miss him if the power
Of storm us smite, remembering him a tower
Of strength; and miss him, too, though pilot's
wheel

Steer us in placid waterways of weal,
Where all's like summer sunshine after shower.
It hath been joy to shake out or take in
Sail to his masterful bidding; and lift gaze
At his behest to midnight skies, and tell
Our course by stars. . . . Whatso new ports he win,
Whoso his crew to lead in coming days,
God speed him still! We have been captained
well!

OUTBOUND

Progress

Once on a time, six thousand years ago—
Or twice or thrice six thousand—Trilobites
Were the only people having eyes, and they
Had scarce begun to have them, so that some
Were yet sans eyes or signs of eyes to be.
The utmost e'en their seers could ken as yet
Was that in murk they lived their life, although
Perchance there might be such a thing as light.
As time went on, one of them so advanced
That having haply come to the water's top
By day, he saw the sun. So down he went
And told the folk below, in general
The world was light, which state of things was
caused
By an all-illuming One. Him, then, they slew,
Charged with disturbance of the commonwealth;
Yet deemed it impious ere long to doubt
The world in general was light, and One
The cause alone of light. But fierce disputes
They had about the manner in which they
Had come to know this.

PROGRESS

Afterwards another
Likewise so far advanced that being borne
To the water's top by night he saw the stars;
And going back he told the folk below
The world in general was dark, but yet
Had lights in a great number. Him they slew
For maintenance of doctrines that were false.
But from that time the Trilobites were split
Into two parties, these maintaining this,
Those, that,—until enough had learned to see,
Monist and pluralist alike, with eyes.

OUTBOUND

Ambition

DEWDROPS in a blossom's cup
Dream of buoying vessels up.

Every glow-worm thinks 'twould grace
The lost Pleiad's vacant place.

If spheres retired, their music dumb,
Motes would cry: "My hour is come!"

“A BLUR OF BUILDINGS”

“A Blur of Buildings”

(On a distant prospect of a marine biological
laboratory)

I

A blur of buildings in the distance,
Hills at their back, and at their front, the sea,
All summer took my gaze with strange insistence,
Whenso I strolled alone to be
With the loveliness of shore 'twixt them and me.
No rarer seascape e'er was gazed upon
Than that beheld from where I've stood:
The Sea—a Solomon
To Queen-of-Sheba rise and set of sun!
And the sickle-curve of shore with surfy white
Blossoming and reblossoming in the light! . . .
Yet ofttimes vision ranging as it would
Leapt to the clustered buildings glimpsed afar,
To pore in quiet thought on what they are.
A visible embodiment, lo, these,
Of man's interrogating—here, of seas!
His importuning things,

OUTBOUND

Out of the Mystery that him enrings
To make revealment somewhat of themselves.
Elsewhere he barter, builds, or delves:
Here he would know. . . .
Whereof he covets lore, the vastness, lo!
What he would understand, the deep, behold!
Fain is he here of news
What gamut hath the sea
Of life from whale to animalculae;
What are from massing kelp, the tide upflings,
To filmiest vegetation out of ooze.
Such Odyssey to travel here he makes him
bold. . . .

II

Last night old Ocean shook with laughter.
"Record tides?"
I know the reason why he held his sides, —
And laughed until the very earth
Flooded with peals of silver mirth;
I knew it after
I saw the blur of white in coign of hills,
And thought what place it fills.
Methinks there must have come into his ken
Somehow an inkling of its purpose, too.
Someone had whispered him, I know not who,

“A BLUR OF BUILDINGS”

That bent within sit spectacled sage men
In microscopic study of the slime,
His sputum; that they tabulate and sum
All the life-history and descent of scum
Since when it rose in time;
That by aquarium culled out from him
They would epitomize his world aswim. . . .
Ocean laughed
Until the darkling hills thought him gone daft.
I heard—broke into laughter, too,
With the hilarious Deep,
And laughed later again in sleep,
And laughed, awake: so'd you,
Getting old Ocean's (and my) point of view.

III

The Sea this morning is of other mood:
His rondure—ah, how multihued!
Like bubble's iris
All his attire is,—
And I, as one at feast, partake of food.
Afar out of a mist the wonted blur
Of buildings now doth reoccur.
The pigmy hath grown wrestler, giant-thewed,
And I, a mocker erst, grow worshiper. . . .

OUTBOUND

What though 'tis labor but of ants, our grapple
With yonder sea's
Staggering faunas, staggering floras,
Immanent there beneath the blue-green dapple?
Yet that we have not quailed,
Yet that we durst confront such mysteries—
Our Pelion piled on Ossa, albeit o'er us
Topless Olympus towers unscaled—
Is cause for awe I trow,
Is reason adequate for worship now.
What though, while we aspire to know as gods,
Our learning go to seed in mental pods?
What though, by snail-like increments, our wit
Make progress, compassing the infinite?
Not what he is, what he would be
Is Man's sublimity!
And therefore from yon pharos of the mind
Streams in upon me light till I grow blind.
Yon clustered buildings dome themselves with
sky;
I stand saluting: Presence goeth by. . . .
Of the resplendent dead with awe I think,
Through whom came Knowledge, link by toil-
some link.
Like one in trance behold I what's to do—

“A BLUR OF BUILDINGS”

What desert wilds of sage, each morn anew,
To hive-emerging bees.
Cloistered Mendel saw—and wrought with peas;
Darwin with earth-worms, too.
Not only in the vastnesses we search,
But follow atom's cue in smut and smirch;
Peer into slime, comb every discard lump
Of matter, as the poor, a city's dump.
Jewelry may be there . . . coin, too . . . who
 knows?
Enough to pay our way abroad!
Torn guide-books, haply, or soiled leaves from
 those,
Yet Baedeker enough to travel God! . . .

OUTBOUND

“In My Father’s House”

I LOVE, I love this beauteous world of ours,
This irised shell whose pearl is Deity!
I love a forest wild, a maddened sea,—
Their swaying massive greens; I love a flower’s
Dew-shimmer; swathing mist; the sun ’twixt
 showers;
The moon whose veil of cloud is half withdrawn;
That white-haired Quiet face to face with dawn,
A mount which into lonely summit towers.
I love the seamless blue of noon; the shade,
Rewoven pensively for sundown earth;
I love the royal Thunder’s cannonade
Of gladness o’er a Rainbow’s princely birth;
I love the cosmic hush in space afar;
I love the universe from mote to star.

OUT-OF-DOORS

Out-of-Doors

JUST to inhale this prairie air, afoot,
Out on a prairie road, flanked either side
With stubble fields; just to reopen wide
One's windowed soul, and every door flung shut,
And let the winds blow through it; just to put
Miles in the rear of me with strenuous stride,
Men in the rear of me, and city's pride,
Self in the rear, with no less reek and soot—
The glee of it! . . . They nibble and sip, no doubt,
My out-of-doors, the folk who distanced me,
Soft-cushioned in their car, that yonder fades.
I walk and breathe: my soul's the leaping trout
In a water brook, God's mountain ecstasy,—
Darting and swimming in the white cascades.

OUTBOUND

Adolescence

MY SIREN is a storm-disheveled wood,
Toothed lightnings comb; or torrent rush, that
 raves
Down a circuitous channel, chaos paves.
I climb aloft where Alpine solitude
Lies yawning for an avalanche, its food,
Just to halloo into the dark of caves.
Ho, ho! I envy mere-folk when the waves
Froth like a royal ale for wassail brewed.
I crave adventure as the hunter, game;
My being's ichor must have fierce delight:
A precipice with the strange lure and urge
And shudder of recoil anigh the verge;
Or python smoke in the dim tocsined night,
And savage glee of liberated flame.

LAKE LOUISE

Lake Louise

OUT of blue-green Lake Louise,
Singing waters came down to meet me,
Danced from among their mountain trees,
With shining morning face to greet me.

God! what space-congesting heights!
Peaks upsoaring and peak outwinging! . . .
What of the mirror of their flights,
Whence poured that jubilation of singing?

Up I climbed, the brook my guide,
Up into grandeurs that ensky it,
Till, ere I knew, lo, there beside
Sheer mount, the azure-emerald Quiet!

Ever back of the song, the Soul!
Ever back of the dream, the Dreamer!
Ever back of the part, the Whole!—
And here, back of supreme, Supremer! . . .

Out of blue-green Lake Louise,
Singing waters came down to meet me,—
Lyric precursive prophecies
Of what fulfilled ere long did greet me!

OUTBOUND

The Kingbird

I LIKE the little bird!
Yesterday, on my word,
I cheered him when he took in tow
A supercilious crow.

To-day I saw him bent
On punitive intent,
And laughed to think how verily this
Was Salamis.

With like fierce buffetings
Of swift pugnacious wings
Was Attic summer azure freed
From the ill-omened Mede.

A THRENODY

A Threnody

THOU dead, whose throat with ecstasy
Was wont to overflow so;
And hushed thy wondrous melody,
Thou sylvan virtuoso?

Our eyes are fed with purple light,
When Day her end is nearing;
Who'll feed, since thou hast taken flight,
Our hungry sense of hearing?

Thou wast, when in thy lustihood,
Of all but song a scorner:
Has not the Abbey of the wood
Somewhere a Poets' Corner?

And yet why bury in the ground
Wings that have lost their fleetness?
Some leaves will do. . . . So, there's a mound!
Sleep, child of light and sweetness!

OUTBOUND

A Mountain Sunrise

UPWARD the gradual trail that serpentines
A mountain-side we climbed, ere yet the dawn
That silvery fore-radiance had withdrawn
Of the sun's white upcoming. As when shines
A singer's face with song his heart divines,
Yet knowing not but it may fail him, low
His lips make moan . . . beneath that natal glow
Sighing half audibly, uprose the pines.
Higher and higher aloft the spiral trail,
Where light became effulgence; far beneath,
The legioned hush and sylvan majesty!
Another splintered crag like dragon's teeth,
And lo, upon the summit, giving hail
Unto the vast of skyey outlook, we!

PRESENCE

Presence

GAZING without

I see the migrant flakes,
Swirling multitudinous out of the skies;
Social snowflakes, winter-tide's butterflies,
Winter's locusts putting the sun to rout,
Whose seething advent unmakes and makes,
Whose flashing coming is smiting and healing in
one,

Ending of all things old, all new things begun;
Cancelling rutted highways, landmarks of fields,
Stubbles of bygone yields,
Plains portioned out into states,
As loaves from the kneaded dough,—
Unraveling the many, weaving the One below;
Out of what nowhere source,
Speeding what nowhither course,
O multi-myriad shuttle whose to-and-fro creates
Yonder the whelming shroud of yesterdays,
Yonder to prescient gaze
Swaddling clothes for a man-child birth,—
To-morrow, scion whose realm be the After-
earth! . . .

OUTBOUND

Ah, here is dream,
Vision and glory, worthy singer's emprise!
I, falconing space for a theme,
Find quarry congesting the skies,—
Find myself the pursued, put to rout
By kingbird dartings of meaning athwart and
about. . . .

Sense me seemed the rear entrance to soul:
The gala front-way portals, carven and wrought
Richly, I deemed were Feeling and Thought;
But here God entereth in by the humbler door,
Making matter Presence as never before;
Yet even for entering so,
Plunging on either side His chariot pole,
Dappled splendors hale hither their Lord,
As if for Last-Judgment award;
And yet . . . and yet . . . who doth know
But yon an utterleast flakelet of snow
Is Presence-chamber now,
Where, before white-throned Spirit, spirit may
bow!

Here seemeth whirlwind His choice:
Crashing mid-prairie, tempest hath broke,
Making the smitten plains to smoke;
Ruining down its thoroughfare, space,

PRESENCE

Blanching all with Omnipresence of Face. . . .
Anon for such coming in power,
The still small Voice!
Emerged at the door of this fleshly cave,
I will stand, His prophet, that Hour,
Mantling my sight, yet beholding that save
For Him there is godhead none,—
Save for Him, the One,
No worship in lands abroad.
With the Vision alone,
Obeisant unto Its passing, I shall have known
Horeb, the mount of God.

OUTBOUND

"I Am"

CONVINCE the greening earth no spring-tides be ;
The sun, no dawn ; the stars of night abroad,
No skyey azure ; soul, no deity :
The only evidence of God is God.

PENELOPE

Penelope

ONCE when a sigh
Escaped my lips in time of spirit ebb,
And leaden dearth of sky,
And valley of snowy plains beneath mine eye;
When day's incipient thaw,
Nightly precipitation so undid,
More utterly than ever earth was hid;
Suddenly then I saw
This weaving and unravelling of snow
Like hers—the queen of suitor-foiling web,
Chaste for her homing lord thereby,
And chaste for all the after-ages so.
Here, too, lo, an Awaited One,
Earth's lordly spouse, the Sun!
To slay with arrows keen of warmth and light
Fogs, crowding in and lusting for embrace,
Fain to unsceper him of state and place.—
I repented me that I erewhile did plain,
I repented me of seeing not aright.
Penelope . . . the Prairie without stain!

OUTBOUND

Night

O Night, the apotheosis of Day!
Whene'er the mind grows poor and self-content,
I need but gaze upon thy firmament,
And boundless cosmic thoughts once more hold
 sway;
I need but view thy star-paved Milky Way,
To tremble with new promptings to ascent;
And watch thy moon on heights of azure bent,
To feel the tidal soul suffuse the clay.
Full-flooding noons, the eagle's gaze hath met,
Long afterglows o'er endlessness of sea,
And mountains with their lone white peaks
 untrod,—
These would have been, thou being not: and yet
What Beauty at the full? and, save for thee,
What Hymen of the pure in heart with God? . . .

“IN THE COOL OF THE DAY”

“In the Cool of the Day”

IN THE cool of the day He walked the garden,
And the little flowers met His eyes in the way :
No sin was yet in the world to pardon,
Nor sunset mixed with regret of the day.

The afterglow took unwonted splendor,
Of smoldering flame was the mountains' attire ;
Encircling trees loomed golden to render
Their heavenly Visitant tribute of fire.

Out of the forest's translucent porches
Came He at length, of His revery fain :
And Night, enkindling her myriad torches,
Lighted Him back to His heavens again. . . .

We would furlough Toil with a little slumber,
Yet sudden dreams make a sword of the night ;
Nor needs must be the awakening to number
Again in the ranks of who struggle and fight.

But Twilight meek that the earth doth inherit,—
O tender with what all-tenderness, she!

OUTBOUND

Her gift—no Nessus-robe to who wear it;
Her quietude like a tide of the sea,

The channels reflooding that soon would
harden,—

Spirit again overmastering clay!
In the cool of the day He walked the garden:
Ours be His peace in the selfsame way!

THE HILLS

The Hills

THE hills, the hills, in that sweet South
Of our blended summer days!
Bridal at morn with softest mist,
At evening kissed
Farewell beneath a veil of sunset haze,
Saffron and amethyst!

The hills, the hills, in that sweet South
Of our blended summer days!
Shimmer of ocean at their feet,
Making retreat
Into blue distances, whereon to gaze
Was spirit's drink and meat!

The hills, the hills, in that sweet South—
But enough of fond regret!
Prairie again since fate so wills!
My life fulfills
Itself not without joy, here too,—and yet,
The hills! our summer hills! . . .

OUTBOUND

Essence

IF OUT of these lapsed days I could recall
Beauty, and by distilling make them be
Like perfumes rare to pour out fragrantly,
And scent a scentless season to befall,
Surely it were poor thrift not to put all
Else by, and let them work their will of me:
Who knows but in them may be potency
Such as was David's harp to lowering Saul!

So letting a sweet pageantry of sights
And scenes come back in quietude of dream,
I sit here of an evening. Like a stream
Known to the far beholder on the heights
By aureole of mist, whereon the lights,
Moonglade and starglade, intermelting gleam,
So aureoled in memory doth seem
A summer's flow afar of days and nights.

And what if not that one was at my side,
Gentle co-sharer and co-worshiper,
Makes rich in retrospect the hours that were!

ESSENCE

Whether a mountain goal with strenuous stride
We sought, or stood before entrancéd tide,
Receiving sunset benizon, for her
How the loveliness I felt grew lovelier!
How sure in dew-like influence to abide!

Oh, what a tow-path were the universe
For haling the brute bulk of things, unless
Betimes there came surcease of strain and stress,
And living by bread only! We might curse
Job-like our birth-hour, knowing ourselves worse
Than ruminating beast, if Quietness
Us pastured never,—the sweet shepherdess,
Tenderer than our tenderest dreams rehearse!

'Tis out of the self dofft with doubt and cares
That spring the very joys for which we pine:
O idle bookless hours wherein no sign
Of gain—what rich ingathering was theirs!
Then sowing not nor reaping we were heirs
To kingdoms, all the affluence divine
Poured spendthrift with the morning's rain or
shine,
Where toiling might have netted us but tares.

Strange law of spirit husbandry, attested
By days whereto I backward yearn this hour!

OUTBOUND

Their largess—came it not as to a flower
Perfume and color, not desired or quested,
Or from begrudging hand of giver wrested,
But lavished freely like the April shower,
Or like the little bird's melodious dower,
That singing soars aloft from where it nested?

In glad release where sea and mountain wrought
Sorceries on a prairie-sated mind,
I lingered, fain of clime where Nature kind
Doth make of summer the perpetual lot
Of dwellers there, her hand withholding naught.
What tenderness I had not dreamed to find
Alike in morning sun and sun declined!
Smiles as for child in mother-arms upcaught!

Goaded by sting and frenzy of the frore
Blasts out of northern sky, I oft have said:
"What matter, so to Beauty I be wed
Within!" . . . and sought me shelter behind door.
And yet doth it not matter if before
The outward eye no loveliness be shed
Abroad? From whence the spirit's daily bread,
If not out of the sense-world's yielded store?

Forgive, great Prairies, the so puling strain!
Not niggard is the bounty that your hands

ESSENCE

Dispense unto the heart that understands.
For thirst there hath been beaker here to drain;
For hunger, meat. Then wherefore Song's disdain?

Because, forsooth, I walked on alien strands,
Or climbed unnative hills? . . . Forgive, great
Lands!

Forgive my "Colin Clout's come home again!"

—Our country, rife with oil and wine and corn,
Her milk and honey everywhere aflow,
Hath not a peer in beauty, too, I know.
Who sees Yosemite invading morn
With trees whose Samson locks were never shorn,
Or Shasta with his hieroglyphs of snow,
But needs must wonder, in that hour of glow,
Why yet hath not the Singer of these been born?

For why should forests wrestle with the gales,
Or why the wonder of a prairie's lone
Communion with the sunset, and the blown
Rose of the morning o'er expectant vales;
Why else our seas' white foliage of sails,
Niagara and twice-plunging Yellowstone,
Unless that Song should come into her own,
Failing of which, of Destiny she fails?

OUTBOUND

What though the Mississippi Gulfward speed,
Creating sea-usurping deltas, whence
New empire states will rise in ages hence?
Forgot will be our every thought and deed
Not Song-rehearsed. Thus is it fate-decreed:
In Song alone a land hath permanence.
Abiding Hellas draws her glory thence,
But where to-day Phoenicia's wealth and greed!

The cloud of hand-like breadth before great rain,
Who gazing forth from Carmel now espies?
Lo, spirit tropics 'neath exhausted skies,
Where only the spiked cactuses remain,
And heart hath gone to seed in cunning brain!
O for an Age less knowing and more wise!
O for a Seer as of old to rise,
And shepherd us with Vision once again!

Man's body soars to-day like nimble swallow,—
Curbed are the mettled air-foals; land and sea
Are rutted with his thunderous chariotry:
Soars, too, his Spirit . . . or doth only wallow?
It cannot be: Spirit must lead, not follow,
Else queenless swarm our triumphs; else are we
Mazeppas of our own speed-enginery,—
Ay, of the planet plunging through heaven's
hollow!

ESSENCE

—So questioned we perplexed of time and fate,
Betimes in summer days, where bush or tree
Shredded the noonday sunlight; yet the glee
And zest of things more oft postponed their
weight

And mystery to other place and date.

Waves capped themselves with merriment of the
sea:

Admitted to their jocund company,

How could our hearts be other than elate!

Be still elate, the wintry months ahead,

And glad with the same gladness, heart, con-
tinue!

Albeit unknown, the web of fate they spin you,
Yourself may weave the Adriadne-thread

Whereby your groping lightward will be led
Through labyrinth that baffleth wit and sinew.
Be still elate: heaven's kingdom is within you,
Whatever darkling maze the feet may tread!

If stream-begotten canyons have been sawed

Out of the basic adamant of things,

Where water toiling in the depth yet sings,

Why should not we whose souls have been abroad
'Mid scenes where beauty charmed and wonder
awed,

OUTBOUND

Ply whatsoever task the morrow brings
With singing? Earth is fair, the sun upsprings
As yesterday—the same heavens! the same God!

Ay, singing though with transitory breath,
A transitory season! 'Twixt the child,
And Age, the child again, not many-miled
The stream of human life meandereth.
Thus serious mid-manhood's vision saith.
Yet, flowing, if betimes it shall have smiled
Green meads among, nor wound its course un-
 isled,
Sweetly repose admonishing, comes Death.

A little sheaf of Ruth-gleaned hours may sow
What tracts of Time for harvest! Camelot
Itself upbuilt out of the forgot.
Our yesterdays become the Long-Ago
By passing of the years, and then bestow
Their precious balm on memory, being not—
As grasses by the subtle sickle cut
Become all after-odorous for the throe. . . .

“WHEN THE WAVES SLIP BACK”

“When the Waves Slip Back”

(On espying a fish left behind by the tide)

This stark and noisome thing with eyes astare,
Left dry on the rock,—
Clove it indeed with arrowy swimming
The main a half hour since?
Was all yon vast of liquid sea
’Twixt Polar solitudes and Carib summer
Thine,—but a half hour since?
And then of a sudden—thine no more,
When the waves slip back!

And me whom Birth endenized in Time,
Shall the like befall?
Cleave I not, too, with arrowy swimming
A main, mastering it all?
A vast of liquid sea
’Twixt bournes whereof to thought is no con-
ceiving,
Mine—till what tidal hour?
And then of a sudden—mine no more,
When the waves slip back!

OUTBOUND

Song of Unrest

OFT in hours of sleeplessness,
Sad of soul,
In a shadowy recess
Of the wood I stroll.
Sighs the forest: "In the glooming,
When the trees are skyward looming,
Comes a cloud the stars entombing,
And I mourn in sleeplessness."
Oft in hours of sleeplessness,
Sad of soul,
In a dewy-eyed recess
Of the dell I stroll.
Sobs the lowland: "There's a yearning
In the humblest bosom burning:
Vales to mountains are upturning
Wistful eyes of sleeplessness."

Oft in hours of sleeplessness,
Sad of soul,
In a moonlight-blanced recess

SONG OF UNREST

Of the lea I stroll.

Moans the night-wind: "Earth is dreary,
Life mysterious and uncheery,
And the human heart aweary
With unrest and sleeplessness."

Oft in hours of sleeplessness,

Sad of soul,

In a foam-befringed recess

Of the beach I stroll.

Sings a wavelet: "Death's a pillow,

Giving sleep to man and billow,

And 'neath yew or weeping willow

None need suffer sleeplessness."

OUTBOUND

"Times Be When Life Seems Aimless and Uncouth"

TIMES be when Life seems aimless and uncouth,
Like a whelp's day-long loping to and fro;
When little that the boastful world can show
Seems worthy reverence, scarce worthy ruth.
Its empire at the beck of birth-crowned youth;
Authority, the lord of them that know;
Still wrung from Galileo: "Ay, even so!"
Nor now his whisper, reenthroning Truth.
And many a Baiae, lying sea-empearled,
All garlanded with loveliness appears;
Yet there who enters in Penelope
Comes forth—Helen. Knowing that such things
 be,
Long since I had forwearied of the world,
But for my Loved One's widowed after-years.

MOODS

Moods

MOODS, moods,
Ye are like broods,
Tempest would smite on,
Sparrow-hawks light on,—
Therefore ye lie 'neath the covert of wings,
Sensitive things!

Moods, moods,
Ye are like feuds,
Truce hath brought hush to,
Consciousness, blush to,—
Therefore ye vanish away into air,
Tarrying ne'er!

Moods, moods,
Brief interludes,
Sun during bleak days,
Sabbath dream, week-days,—
Therefore ye dower life with something sublime,
Outlasting time!

OUTBOUND

Surf

Out of the sea's continuous white offensive
A record-making breaker up the sand-bar . . .
And so I fall to pondering human lives.

Seething offensives and retreats—the sea!
One's backward clashing with another's forward,
One's white momentum upward, tackled, hurled
Aback—and so no record on the sand.

One rising, white-toothed, blue-lipped, out at sea,
And thunderous churning shoreward with a wake
 of madness,
Touching the strand just as all waves are spent,
All oppositionless in swirl of onset,
With an avalanche of waters, flooding, flooding,
Making a record up the sands unequalled,
And lapping in dry stranded strings of kelp.

Another rising, caught in its fierce ebbing,—
Crushed by the hissing python in recoil;
Sepulchred in the sea without achievement,
Cancelled and void because another scored.

SURF

Out of the sea's continuous white offensive,
The endless generations of the surf . . .
And I, in revery, pondering human lives!

OUTBOUND

Cause and Effect

BETWEEN trains there was time to stroll a bit:
I walked the main street with displays in shops,
Lazily in the mood of one who drops
Worry, and let things harry him no whit,
Or men. Then jarred on sight—words scarce
befit—

Athwart me someone reeling, with a top's
Wobbling uncertainty just ere it stops.
“Better go back,” I said,—“watch women knit.”
But—hours of waiting. Freight-train gone
askew.—

The town was that in which the State doth house
Her weak-brained—whom I visited anon,
Ward after crowded ward . . . a piteous crew!
In one of them was he of the morn's carouse,
Calling to see—what should have been his
son. . . .

EN ROUTE

En Route

It's risking loss, no matter where one scants
Attention.—Passing by a station's freight
Promiscuously piled, I spied a crate,
Doubly compartmented for occupants:
A fuzzy little roll of lap-dog fat,
Whimpering, whining, yelping—eyes aswim;
A square-jawed bulldog, just a little grim
More than his wont, no doubt, but—standing pat.
Like a barbed seedling caught, the picture clings,
Which Aesop might have captured for his scrolls,
And made a pricking lesson of—afresh
Indulging his old bent for fabling things—
On how to meet discomfiture, our souls
Awaiting shipment in their crates of flesh.

OUTBOUND

Kelp

INTERLACED flora, maze and tangle of growth!
The same I saw last night and yester-year,
The same God saw in yester-aeon:
Wonderful to us both! . . .
Whether in North afar its peace or here,
Or fusing dream with waters Caribbean,
To keep identity of selfhood so,
To thrive on menace, unperturbed to grow
Despite the impact of the tidal seas,
Merits a little heed in days like these.
Assaulted constantly by burly breakers,
Yet ne'er repaying blow for blow;
Peacefuller than Quakers,
Albeit Ocean bugles in its ear
To legionary onset and a host
Makes thunderous bombardment of the coast;
Ne'er giving way to fear,
Keeping in strength and spirit equipoise,
Despite confusion, turmoil, noise;
Surf-buffeted, storm-howled-at, ocean-hissed,
Yet still—pacifist;

KELP

Gigantic, yet with Sabbath mood alway,
June or December, night and day;
Verily here I find
In stringy kelp of homely brown
What I have searched the world for up and
 down,
Nor hoped might ever be,
Whether in world of matter or of mind!
Of such as Kelp the Kingdom verily! . . .

Changeless, and yet—all changed!
For where is aught the same in world so wracked
And anguished as to-day's?
Almost I walk estranged
With sea, with morn, impotent to react
To the bloom, the glow, wherewith they meet
 my gaze.—

I said: "Poor thrift, this sleeplessness abed!
I'll up and hie me where the Sea halloos
His tides. I'll up and share the morning red
With ocean kelp. Mayhap a blend of hues
Rarer and richer now is on the ooze
Than I have thrilled to yet,
Trysting with sea at rise of sun or set." . . .
Surmise was not amiss:
Ne'er bed of kelp more multihued than this!

OUTBOUND

A spirit of beauty is abroad this hour
In rarity like a flower.
What infinite repertory Nature hath
Of joy: winged sun from ocean's chrysalis,
And cataract of stars out of her gloom!
But man perverting her to ill,
Making her serve his wrath,
Making her sting, and stab, and kill—
Therein and thence is doom.

And can it be
Yon amplitudes of kelp are being made
Means of the world's war-madness, too, and aid?
That yonder girdle of the sea,
Oozy ocean cincture of continents,
Held a hidden sword, a shining blade,
Whereby the world's Berserker wrath augments
Slaughter, this time of fate?
Flown o'er by pelicans with oaring wings,
Neighbor to ocean lands throughout which sings
The meadow-lark all seasons of the year,
Winter's no less than spring's,
How all aloof this scene from hate!
How unconcerned with aught of fear!
Of the all-engulfing war,
With nation slitting nation's jugular,

KELP

And Teuton plunge for planet empery,
What recked the kelp-tranced sea?
Yet lo, in the distance, barges,
Harvesting night and day with triple shift
Of toil the kelp from whence my soul's uplift,
Rapture and spirit largess!
For Science, keen-eyed, hath espied
Swathed high explosives in yon langorousness,
Useless, forsooth, till now in wind and tide.
Such the tentacles war hath,
Such the suction of its wrath,
All-commandeering war, without redress,
All-spoliating for its own increase,
Even this morning dream and vesper peace
Is wrought into its Clytemnestra net,
And flung around mankind for butchery!
Great God, how long shall yet
Such nations' Ate be! . . .

O the Nemesis in things,
That thus out of discovery only springs
More poison-fanged a world and keen of claw
To lacerate and rend!
While steadfast Science labors to the end,
Translating matter into terms of Law,
Of bringing things beneath the sway of man,
Man 'neath the sway of things bemeans himself

OUTBOUND

As never hitherto since time began.

Anathema! "Retro me, Satana!"

To Science, if indeed her summing up

Be ill for human kind! Ay, dash it down,

If for the race be poison in the cup!

At least the days of Ghibelline and Guelph,

Howso they splashed their blood-feuds o'er the
town,

Could not coerce sweet Nature to their ends

Of vengeance and affright;

At least when Greek fought fellow Greek, their
might

Of mutual destruction found not help

And furtherance in clinging beds of kelp,

Awakened out of oozy sleep in bends

And windings of the Grecian shore.

Ah, never, never more,

These waters should be named Pacific!

Surely all forfeit is the name they bore,

Being put to use so martial, so terrific.

Here in high Dream's employ,

And tense Hebraic mood,

Purged of all individual alloy,

These leagues of mighty ocean I surveyed

As symbol of like vast pan-racial good.

KELP

Then suddenly the soul in me
Rose geyser-like in wild apostrophe:
America, my Country, art thou weighed
In the balance and found wanting? O thou Land
Of promise unfulfilled, and high desires
Blasted like waves upon an iron strand!
With thy dread failure thou dost make afraid
Who trusted thee, hoped for thee, and lit fires
For beacons on thy mountains. Thou dost reel
With wine, art fat with feasting, and thy lips
Are the abode of wantonness and mirth;
Thou peoplest the great deep with ships,
And on the uttermost earth
As conqueror hast trod and set thy heel.
Yet thou hast made of weal
A fetish god, and worshipest thy gold
As calf-delirious Israel of old.
It was not for the dancing of such rite
Thy feet have forded seas
With pillar of cloud by day and fire by night;
Nor passed they through those dire calamities
Of other nearer days, whereof the woe
Still lives, to stumble now and go amiss.
O lifted up by that vast earthquake throe
To be the world's enskyed Acropolis,
Thinkest thou to be hid? . . .

OUTBOUND

Forgive my lips, forgive me that I chide,
White Wonder of indomitable will!
But I would see thee as I once did see,
With prairies, mountains, wave-anointed strands,
The Virgin-born of Lands,
Fulfilment of thy singers' prophecy,
And of all nations the Messiah still! . . .

The sea itself upheaves
To pace the world with tides, and scattered
leaves

Its kelp to etch the pathway of its march.
The roar summons me back from elsewhere—
The human welter of energy,
With brinier kelp from waters more resistless.
Almost I would the vastness seething there,
The waves with feet that prance, with necks that
arch,

All the super-beauty of the sea,
Might drug me to forget, with heart grown list-
less,

The pitifulness and pathos of man's life,
The pitifulness and tragedy of his strife. . . .
Just when democracy was nascent; just
When man was climbing upward out of dust
With something of momentum, and a new

KELP

Sense of achievement thrilled him through and
through;

Just when he thought to lay more bastions low
Of privilege and error, and make way
With ancient exploitations, and to grow
Into the stature of himself indeed—

Then this Nay

To his dreams, to his hopes, to God!

Then Belgium trodden into the sod—

Ploughed under by the Teuton human plough,
Before which freedom is a noxious weed,
That, flowering, menaces with thorn and spike;

Then in that racial crisis, we

Battening on blood-lucre, Judas-like;

Nor even protesting, save for our own rights—

Studious of our own ease and how

To prosper, whereso victory or defeat!

But wherefore, wherefore repeat

Here within ear-shot of the moaning sea

The story of man's plunge adown the heights!

I'll discipline myself to be resigned.

Withdrawal still is possible and sweet,

Withdrawal still is home—

Pillow and cup and bread to soul and mind,

Wearied and sick of things as they of yore.

OUTBOUND

Civilization is a little foam,
Riding a little kelp, and cast ashore,
And cancelled by a little noon forevermore. . . .
1916

** See note.

THE MELTING POT

The Melting Pot

THE town was there in force to give the boys
Fit send-off: coaches, filled and filling, some
Twenty and more, that heads protruded from;
And music, waving banners, cheering, noise.
Forgot that day were private griefs and joys:
'Twas soldier torn from sweetheart, parent,
 chum;

'Twas One-out-of-the-many flesh become.
Thus War fulfills, and not alone destroys.—
The parting neared. It somewhat hushed the
 throng.

One picture, given heed that moment, stays:
Twain, face to face—aged father, stalwart son.
“Take God along to France” in Norseman’s
 tongue,

I caught—and watched their mutual farewell
 gaze,
Intent and lingering. . . . The train was gone.

OUTBOUND

Democracy

I

At gaze I stand—backward the endless miles:
Mediterranean splintered capes and isles
Aryanized at length,
Lo, Man beginning to put forth his strength
On land, and flaking with first sails the sea!
Lo, up and down great battle-fields, commanders,
Sowing their mandates among soldiery,—
The legions whence great Caesar harvested
Empires; the cohorts which were Alexander's,
Crisscrossing Asia with unwearied tread!
Then loosed upon the South the whelming
hordes,—
Out of the Gothic wilds wave upon wave
In white and terrible surf uphurled
Against a dykeless world!
And fallow centuries lingered through with
patience,
Until the welter Zionward of nations,
With onset of resistless swords,—
Occident against Orient—for a Grave!

DEMOCRACY

Then—the Great Quickening!
Man's mind, an Aetna, active once again!
Twin Americas plucked out of the seas
By the dreaming Genoese!
Like the multi-myriad progeny of Spring,
New universes out of spatial vastnesses,—
The olden universe withdrawn:
And curtain of the Temple rent in twain
For the instreaming Dawn!
Anon, Science, big-limbed, unkempt,—
The serpent-strangling Babe sublime!
Anon, the Dream the prescient ages dreamt,
Being bodied forth at last,—
Democracy! . . . out of the frustrate Past,
Out of its unachievement and attempt,
In the fulness born of Time! . . .

II

Wherefore to sing hath none essayed
The Wonder and the Terror that is she—
Climactic-born Democracy?
Is it that being afraid
Makes dumb the bardling tribe,
Or is their silence mockery and a gibe?—
What whisper heard I breathed from some-
where: "Hers,

OUTBOUND

The blame of irremediable curse!
Through her, lo, million-funneled Industry,
That smoke-bedims the skies
With reek of Erebus, belched forth amain,
And founs with offal river, hill, and plain!
'Tis she hath tutored Man to mammonize—
His brain to scheme, but not his heart to feel;
She webbed the globe with steel;
Made clang and grinding, hiss and shriek,
For cleanly hamlet, city stench and reek,
The factory, for toil in fields abloom
And woman singing at the loom. . . .
Distinction, artistry—of what account?
Bulk's paramount!
An Age of Everything-en-masse begun!
All things, all men—chaotically one!
Beauty is dead, Soul at an end:
Let us strew ashes on our heads, our garments
rend!" . . .

III

Dolts! were it good, then, to bring peace on
earth?
Nay, still the sword!
Of toiling were it good to make surcease?
Nay, verily the increase,

DEMOCRACY

With sweat and knotted cord,
Like travail waxing until stanch'd by birth!
With wrath be they gazed back upon,
Sabbatic, dawdling centuries ago,—
The planet trundled day and night through
 space,
And yet so little done
To build a marriage bower and spirit dwelling-
 place!
Now that the builder's labor doth begin
Mid the timbers lying prone.
And not yet the corner stone,
Plain we that still no door is garlanded
For the bridal entering in?
Are we vexed and sore bested
That digged foundation raiseth dust o'erhead?
That mauling of the cedar maketh din?
For the slag and excrement
Wherewith each new-oped shaft must needs be
 foul,
Were't better that the Mount had not been rent
And pierced even to the wealth it doth em-
 bowel—
The iron, the marble, the gold,
Whereof Jehovah's house—

OUTBOUND

But kept intact for pasture as of old,
And yielding goats a little shrubby browse?

IV

A half-score yester decades back,
What was the world? . . . To-day, what is it
not? . . .

To-day, smoking with thaw, and harrowed black
For sowers,—tilth wherever the globe's curve is,
Uncouth yet vernal, vastly taking shape;

Where yesterday—perchance, a garden plot,
Sporadic culture of the grape,
Showing but lag, eleventh-hour, vineyard service.
And whence the Change, heartening so the blood
Of rapt historic onlooker abroad?

Whence everywhere Herculean emprise
On land and sea, in skies?

Out of Democracy sprang not and grew
This world-wide derring-do? . . .

Why else the great material challenge flung,
Whereat the new-age chivalry upsprung?

East, West, and South, and North,
How battailous have been its goings-forth,
And hardihood in fight!

Nor only wildernesses made to yield,
Or trade enhanced in mart and crops afield,

DEMOCRACY

But Woman roused and strenuous in zeal
For selfhood's due, the Child's law-fenced
weal,—

Attest not these Democracy aright?
What Power but this hath sceptered knouted
Man—

Worm in the dust, heel-trod, since Time began,—
Ay, makes even thrall in the dust

Lord of himself by influence august! . . .

Him—ridden one made Rider, hath she taught
With dauntlessness of will to rein and curb;

She lessoned him in chariotry superb

Until himself he shies at naught;

And therefore hath it come to be,

Amongst the Forces 'neath his mastery,

One swift, a swifter yet doth supersede,

Foaled of the tameless welkin for his steed;

Which, too, while aeons gather and disperse,

To others must needs yield, till Man, perchance,

Become choregus of the stars in dance,

For a little change of glee,

Will vault upon the saddled universe,

And ride the pampas of eternity.

Who knoweth whereof potent he?

Whereof fain his spirit feels?

The centuries are pools splashed by his chariot
wheels. . . .

OUTBOUND

V

Like looming mountain height,
Uprist to peer beyond horizon bourne
For the coming forth of Morn,
So the consciousness of Man this hour is white
With summit splendor, Now he knows elate
Himself the victor duelist with Fate,
Job of the terrene ash-heap though he seemed.
It suddenly befell he wist
Himself protagonist,
This cosmic Dreamer who on earth hath dreamed.
Blind player led unto the organ keys,
Or groping for harp strings,
And yet by Spirit wielding over Things
Omnific potencies!
And hence his Faith therefrom,
Though yet appear not what he shall become,
That nothing—neither Matter's empery,
Nor sovereignties and kingdoms of the world,
Nor Time, nor Change, nor Death, nor Destiny,
Nor the universe itself against him hurled,
Can separate
And plunge him from his soulhood's high estate.
Even Europe's writhings veto not his creed,
In the wake of War—like Juggernaut's of Ind,
Nor the million-throated Need

DEMOCRACY

Now rife on earth like wailings of the wind.
He knows the racial pain must come to naught—
Be utterly at end,
When a little more he shall have wrought
After his heart's desire with zest impassioned.
For he hath schooled himself to comprehend
Achievement, nor shall pause till he can say,
At gaze upon the world beneath his sway:
“Lo, the Kingdom as in Heaven, my hands have
fashioned!” . . .

November 1918.

OUTBOUND

Advent

UNTO every age, unto every clime,
Sooner or later comes the sublime
Messiah yearning: anear, afar,
Heralding Birth in manger, the Star!
Under the spell of that crescent hope,
Tidal world-spirit leaps toward the cope;
'And Man, appearing dormant, inert,
Like mountain with cincture of vineyards begirt,
Is all volcanic at soul.
Albeit darkling, he gropes toward Goal,
And knows every moment with meaning fraught;
Browsing and sleeping give way to thought;
Mute-born lips are unsealed:
"To Whom is the hand of the Lord revealed?"

December 1918.

GESTANT

Gestant

Nine moons, and lo, the infant life unwombed!
Centuries of gestation, and lo, still
Earth gestant with her unborn Good or Ill!
Yet whatso advent ages thus consumed,
The New out of the Old shall come,
Nor with outward observation, but uprist
With a footfall spirit-whist,—
The eponym of worlds to spring therefrom.
The New out of the Old . . . and not one jot
Or tittle of existence come to naught.
Ere the mornward eyes of Greece,
The timeless night of Egypt's dynasties;
Ere Dante's dome of Thought,
The feudal making brick with toil-won straw.
To-day in dead millennia hath root:
Thence do our sapling years the marrow draw
From whence their flower and fruit.
Yet Calvary, Parnassus, are not Goal,
But mile-stones in the onward march of soul.
To-morn the social order of to-day
Into the oven may be cast straightway.

January 1919.

OUTBOUND

In Campo dei Fiori

“Awakener of sleeping minds,” the rôle
Given him to act in human things he styled—
Giordano Bruno of impetuous soul.
Volcanic as his natal soil, and wild
As the unearthly beauty there enisled,
He was ordained such mission as by Fate;
Yet mingled therewith something of the child,
Even as Shelley, his true spirit mate,—
Which childlike faith but made him the more
great.

He was of those who hail the world's rebirth
As spring is hailed afar by prescient lark;
Who dance before rejuvenated earth
As royal David danced before the ark,
Restored to Zion,—all too glad to mark
A window opened and his queen looked scorn:
Nor heeded he what power above him dark
Was lowering, but with eyes intent on morn
Thrilled with the gladness of the world reborn.

IN CAMPO DEI FIORI

An exile and a wanderer, he, with menace
Of doom above him like a sun befogged
Into a lurid red: at last 'twas Venice,
No longer island queen, but harlot bogged
With treachery, his winged feet enmeshed and
clogged.

As hawk eyes quarry, hankering to give chase,
Rome long had eyed him and his footsteps
dogged:

Gloating she dungeoned him a seven-year space,
Then burned him in her jubilee year of grace.

“I go to carry the Divine in me
To that Divine beyond!” . . . Thus breathed his
lips

Their parting breath. O world too blind to see
What awful sunburst thou dost deem eclipse!

The seeming heresy that sinks its ship's
Anchor, where thou canst only drift and toss,
Till Truth's immovable bed-rock its grips;
And martyr gaze, but the more luminous
Because in death averted from the cross! . . .

Thou Ganymede of thine own eagle thought,
Which bore thee up to conclave of the gods,—
Not unto futile deities once wrought

OUTBOUND

By ancient fancy: Jove no longer nods,
Shaking the heavens with dread, nor is the sod's
Dew-sheen the footprint of a goddess fair;
Yet lifted above life that toils and plods,
Through regions of unfathomable air,
In a divine existence thou hast share.

In more august assembly dost fulfill
Some function worthy thy rich spirit dower:
Great Galileo—Galileo still
By virtue of the after-whisper's power;
The elder Bacon, luminous as tower
That takes with sudden gleam the midnight seas;
And cowed Savonarola, too, and our
Own Milton, ay, and Attic Socrates—
If cup-bearer thou be, it is to these.

Promethean spirit, fleching liquid fire,
Not from one solar fountain source alone,
But on the tameless wings of high desire
Flitting 'twixt worlds as bee 'twixt flowers full-
blown,
To make their inmost flaming soul thine own,
And so return with inward splendor crowned
That the world's darkness might be overthrown—
Thou here transfixed, with suffering profound,
Bound but to be forevermore unbound! . . .

THE TRAGIC MUSE

The Tragic Muse

BYRON'S ejaculations when the road
Grew devious, where his fiery soul he spurred;
The spirit cry from Shelley that a bird,
Lone-soaring, in the highest heaven abode;
The thunder of that tidal wave which flowed
In upon Dante, so with Vision stirred;
And Shakespeare's Fourfold Uttermost . . . I
 heard,
Wondering what more hath singer's gift be-
 stowed.

I asked and lo, still Twain unto the soul—
Like an eclipse, that overmasters skies,
And makes all landscape other than it was!
Those whispers out of Time's great hush of dole:
King Oedipus with self-extinguished eyes . . .
Friendless among his friends, the Man of Uz. . .

OUTBOUND

April 23

WHEN Mary Arden crooned to her third-born,
Making his rude crib rhythmic to her song,
Or bent her o'er his slumber, gazing long,
Came not some moment when the veil was torn
In sunder, and the glory to be worn
By him in manhood's fulness dazed her sight?
Streamed not of a sudden in upon her night—
As in upon another Mary—Morn?
His natal day once more! . . . Ye who would
 praise,
Make pause before his Mother, head bowed low,
And having entered in with feet unshod;
Even in Religion's wise, who dare not raise
Her voice unto the Highest, lest it grow
Dumb before awfulness of too much God.

AND ALL THE GODS WERE GAZING ON THEM

“And All the Gods Were Gazing
on Them”

THRICE around walls, his prowess hath kept
whole ;

Thrice before gates barred in the hour of doom :
Behind, that Terror of lance and helmet plume,
Wherefrom astrain like racer for the goal,
His race with Death ! . . . What save his widow's
dole,

And her breast's orphan, thus postpones the tomb
With plying of swift knees by one than whom
Never more strange to fear a warrior soul !
Him, hot in flight, the phantom brother stays,
And heartens to the combating,—yet flown,
The moment of accepted battle gage,
And weapon hurled, his piteous backward gaze :
And Hector, spearless, sees himself alone,
In the dreadful flash-light of Pelides' rage.

OUTBOUND

If

If, nothing by me wrought, nothing attained,
My face were touched into autumnal snow;
If this quick heart with ramifying roots
Of impulse, but uncrowned with flowers of deed,
Froze; if from night as from a rich black loam
No Rose of Dawn I've dreamed might come to
blossom,

Ere the morn's breezes moaned my threnody—
Cold, cold would be the emerald covering; hard
The bed with gravel bolster; evil dreams
Would give the lie to Death's feigned dream-
lessness;

The dark tomb would enclasp me, envying
The one still-born, and calling to the hills
To hide from the great Talent-Giver's eyes.

ILLUSION

Illusion

Ан, chide not dream! . . . The wavelet soon, too
soon,

Unlearns to clutch at stars and knows with
pain:

The mightiest tide begotten of the moon

But shakes a few foam-petals from the main.

OUTBOUND

Winter Mist

I SAID: "Great artist, wondrous dreamer, Mist!"
Watching its witchery of frost o'erhead
On trees; the wake, world-blanching, of its tread
Spirit-like, as if stealing to a tryst
In moonlight, amid shadows to be kissed;—
Adaze at Omnipresent White it shed
Over all things out of the air, I said:
"Rapt fellow-artist, fellow-dreamer, list:
I, too, by night in revery have wrought,
As thou; but troubled am in mood to know
All singing evanescent, since with dawn
Evanished . . . by englutting Time made naught.
I learn: Mist, working what enchantment—lo!
Letting the aeons have their way, thou'rt
gone." . . .

Notes

"And All the Gods Were Gazing on Them"—p. 161.
See Iliad, Book XXII.

"At School"—p. 55. For the parable in bare outline I am indebted to Felix Adler.

"Behold This Dreamer Cometh"—p. 9. Freely adapted from the Swedish of Gustaf Fröding.

"Calamus"—p. 77. The title of this poem was borrowed from Leaves of Grass, where it heads a series of poems celebrating comradeship.

"Condolence"—p. 75. Composed in memory of the late Richard Watson Gilder.

"I Dreamed That Dream Was Quenched"—p. 16. First appeared in "The Lyric Year," a century of poems by various authors, published by Mitchell Kennerley, 1917.

"Judgment"—p. 51. First published in the Century Magazine, May, 1911.

"Kelp"—p. 136. Summering on the Pacific coast in 1916, I lived within sight and hearing of barges that ceaselessly, night and day, were harvesting kelp. By recent discovery kelp had been made a source of potassium salts, used in the manufacture of certain explosives. Out of these circumstances came the theme of the poem. Its arraignment of America on account of our seeming indifference and lethargy at

NOTES

the time in relation to the European crisis may be of historical interest, although fortunately our whole-hearted later participation in the war changed the situation. The poem first appeared, somewhat abbreviated, in the "Forum" of New York, March, 1917.

"Mothering"—p. 93: Written for the Twenty Fifth Reunion of the Class of '92, University of Minnesota.

"Progress"—p. 96. Adapted from the prose of W. K. Clifford's Lectures and Essays.



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